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## [LOVE'S LOYALTY.]

## ETHEL ARBUTHNOT;

OR,

## WHO'S HER HUSBAND?

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Amy Robsart," "The Bondage of Brandon,"

"Breaking the Charm," &c., &c.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE DUEL TO THE DEATH!

"Make way, Sir Geoffrey Peveril, or you may compel me to do that for which I shall be sorry."

"You shall have no way here but at your peril," replied Sir Geoffrey. "This is my ground."

For a few moments nothing was heard but the hoarse murmur of the waves as they broke in foam on the shingly beach, or the shrill cry of a gull as it swept in narrow circles over the sandy shore. The white cliffs frowned on the two angry men as they stood facing each other. Mr. Gordon was pale as death, but Charles Palethorpe's face burned with a hectic flush where the iron fist of the other had struck him. He was smarting with a sense of offended dignity arising from the personal affront which had been put upon him, as well as oppressed with the weight of that vengeance which he owed to the memory of his deceased father.

That Mr. Henry Carter Gordon was in reality Herbert Layton and the murderer of his parent

he did not doubt, the resemblance between the two being so perfect. To kill him was to achieve a double purpose. He would avenge his father's death, and at the same time clear the way for his union with Ethel Arbuthnot, whom he loved better than his life. Yet he would take no mean advantage of him. It was his purpose and firm intention to give him a chance. Of the two pistols which he had with him but one was loaded, the other being empty.

"Take your choice!" he exclaimed, as soon as he could sufficiently master his emotion to be able to speak.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Gordon, with a bewildered air.

"Simply what I say. Take your choice. One pistol is loaded, the other is not." I, myself, do not know the difference."

"Why should we fight?"

Charles laughed harshly.

"It will not do for you to plead ignorance," he replied. "I say that you murdered my father! In addition to that you struck me!"

"You are labouring under a delusion," said Mr. Gordon. "At first I thought you were an escaped lunatic! Now I begin to understand you, and I assure you on my word of honour you mistake me for someone else."

"Impossible! You are Herbert Layton!"

"On the contrary; I am Henry Carter Gordon. I can give you my card."

"It is useless," answered Charles, doggedly.

"A paltry excuse like this will not save you; a false name shall not avail you! Choose your weapon, sir, and waste no more time."

"But I have no quarrel with you," persisted Mr. Gordon.

Charles stamped his foot upon the ground with impatience.

"Shall I subject you to some personal affront such as you put on me?" he said. "Will nothing provoke you to fight, coward that you are?"

"Will you listen to reason, young man?"

"I will hear nothing more from you!"

Mr. Gordon shrugged his shoulders and smiled with a well-bred hauteur.

"As you will!" he exclaimed. "Give me a pistol! It is your life or mine; but there is only one shot in these weapons. Suppose we miss?"

"I have two more, and you will again have to choose!"

"You are desperate!"

"So would you be if you had the wrongs to avenge that I am labouring under. Step back six paces, sir, and remember Ethel," said Charles.

"Ha! you have met her?"

Charles made no answer. The two men measured six paces, and turning rapidly round, fired. Mr. Gordon fired, but his shot made no impression on his antagonist, for only a cap snapped on the nipple. He had chosen the unloaded pistol. Throwing away the useless weapon, he folded his arms and boldly confronted the young man, who uttered a cry of joy.

"Heaven is on my side!" he cried, exultantly.

"I might have shot you down, but I was chivalrous enough to give you a chance for your life. Now that life is mine! Prepare to die, for rest assured that I shall not miss you!"

"I am ready!" replied Mr. Gordon; "but I

warn you that you are about to commit a crime for which you will some day be sorry!"

"Bah!"

"It is a pure case of mistaken identity."

Charles Palethorpe shook his head gravely.

"That subterfuge will not save you. I never forget a face, and I saw you on the race-course when you left Joe, the tout, to die. It was he who told me your secret, which was afterwards confirmed by your cruelly deceived wife, Ethel Arbuthnot, and if it will embitter your last moments, I may tell you that it is with her sanction, knowledge and permission that I am now here to kill you as you slew my father!"

He raised his arm and levelled the pistol, but his hand shook with nervous eagerness.

"Die!" he exclaimed, as he discharged the pistol.

Mr. Gordon remained perfectly upright, though blood was trickling from his right ear, which the ball had just grazed. Charles had in his agitation missed his mark. With an oath he cast the pistol into the sea, and ground his teeth savagely together.

"Confusion!" he cried.

"Are you satisfied?" asked Mr. Gordon, who though he did not move a muscle of his countenance, seemed to breathe freer after the ordeal he had gone through.

"No, a thousand times no! Curse on my want of skill!"

"This young man is an assassin!" said Mr. Gordon, as if talking to himself.

He looked anxiously up and down the beach, as if looking for assistance, but no one was in sight. Casting his gaze seaward he was equally disappointed, for not a sail dotted the wide expanse of ocean. Charles hastily drew two other pistols from his pocket. He seemed as if he carried an arsenal about with him. He cast one at his adversary's feet.

"For you!" he exclaimed. "Pick it up and defend yourself, for this time I am going to kill you!"

Mr. Gordon stooped down and possessed himself of the dangerous weapon.

"We shall see!" he replied.

Like the others, one was loaded and the other not.

They fired!

This time Charles was lucky: he had the loaded one and Mr. Gordon fell!

With a wild cry he sank upon the sand, which was soon ensanguined with his blood, and his lack lustre eyes began to glaze.

"Heaven forgive him!" he murmured, feebly.

It was a fatal wound, for it had touched the heart. Holding up his hands to Heaven, as if he fully believed in his inner consciousness that he had done a righteous deed, he cried with all the tragic force of his impassioned nature:

"Father, you are avenged!"

And hastily moving towards the cliffs darted up a winding path, which led to the summit. The waves crept up with the incoming tide, and began to lap the body of the unfortunate Mr. Gordon. They laved the pale face, so still and rigid in death, and dabbled with the hair like a child at play, and the wind seemed to make strange weird music, such as the ear of mortal had never heard.

There was music in the leaping waves. It was his requiem. Ten minutes elapsed. Then a man approached the spot where the body lay, and gazed upon the countenance and on the gaping wound, from which the life current oozed slowly. It was Herbert Layton, who was the third man who had arrived at the hotel: for once the man of iron seemed agitated to his heart's core. He shivered as if he was cold, and felt it in the marrow of his bones.

"So he has met his doom," he said to himself, "and I was too late to prevent it. Well, perhaps, it is best so. I ought not to murmur at this decree of fate."

He stood by the body, gazing sadly upon it until it grew dark and the incoming water began to move it up and down. The wind increased to a hurricane. The rain descended in torrents, and the sea, lashed to fury, carried the corpse higher on the beach.

Then the tide turned, and, as if reluctant to relinquish its prey, the water sucked it down in its vortex, and it was finally carried out to sea. When this was accomplished Herbert Layton departed, and wended his way back to the hotel, where he arrived wet through.

Changing his clothes, he inquired for the next train to London, and as if the atmosphere of the place did not agree with him, he departed. As he was leaving the hotel his foot kicked against something, which he saw was a pocket-book, and stooping he picked it up.

When he was comfortably seated in a first-class carriage which he had fed the guard to keep for him only, so that he might not be annoyed by the intrusion of strangers, he thought of the book and opened it. Its contents consisted of letters and disconnected memoranda. There were some cards also, on which was printed the name "Mr. Charles Palethorpe." The letters were from Ethel Arbuthnot, and the memoranda related to Charles's pursuit of Herbert Layton.

Charles had dropped the pocket-book on his return to the hotel after the sanguinary issue of the fatal duel to the death, in which he had played such a prominent part. What had hitherto been a mystery to Herbert, was now made plain as the sun at noon.

He discovered that the son of the man he had murdered had followed Mr. Gordon in mistake for him, and ended by killing him, this being done with the full knowledge, if not the entire consent, of Ethel.

"Charles Palethorpe," he said to himself, "shall never marry Ethel. If I cannot have her he shall not. It is he who has murdered Mr. Gordon, and if I made away with his father he is equally guilty, and the blot has made the egregious mistake of killing the wrong man."

It was a strange conclusion.

"Who can trust a woman?" he continued. "I thought that girl loved me, and now she has turned against me in favour of a boy, for he can be nothing else. Well! I will spoil their continuing love."

All the way to town he haunted over the discovery he had made.

"Yes," he added. "They shall see me. I will tell them the mystery that exists in the resemblance between Gordon and myself. Poor fellow! He always said I should ruin him, Palethorpe has made a mistake, the effects of which he little dreams of."

A few days afterwards the papers contained an account of the finding of the body of a gentleman in the sea near St. Ambrose by some fishermen; documents on the body proved that it was Mr. Henry Carter Gordon, a gentleman well known in fashionable society. The coroner's jury sat on it, and they returned an open verdict, being unable to say whether it was a case of murder or suicide.

## CHAPTER XV.

### ALMOST HAPPY.

"Are we condemned?"

THE DOUBLE MARRIAGE.

ALTHOUGH Lady Woodruffe would have done almost anything in the world to send Ethel Arbuthnot away, she did not dare to provoke her son further than she had already done. Considering that he was so gentle, mild-tempered and obedient to her wishes, he had shown an amount of spirit and decision which was very remarkable, and it evidenced the fact that he took a decided interest in Ethel, which her ladyship hoped sincerely would have no disastrous effects.

She, being a woman of the world, reasoned that it would be better for her to make a friend rather than an enemy of the girl, for if she drove her from the house with ignominy, Tom Woodruffe would find her out, and if he offered her marriage Ethel might in the present poor condition of her fortunes be inclined to accept him.

Now, Lady Woodruffe was an ambitious woman, and wanted her son to make what in fashionable society is called a good match. In fact, she wished ardently that he would marry either money or rank. Accordingly she altered her tactics altogether, and when Ethel recovered from the deathly faint into which she had fallen she tenderly led her upstairs and put her to bed, speaking words of kindness, which soothed the lacerated heart of the poor girl, who listened to her hollow protestations of friendship and believed them. When Ethel had fallen asleep Lady Woodruffe again sought her son, whom she found pacing the drawing-room impatiently.

"I am sorry I spoke hastily to you, mother," he exclaimed.

"I knew you would be, my dear boy," replied her ladyship, "as soon as the heat of the moment had passed, and you had time to reflect."

"You see," he continued, "I always had a liking for Miss Arbuthnot, and when I found her homeless and penniless in the snow I could not do less than bring her home. I have offered her and her mother Brook Cottage and a certain annual salary to keep the steward's accounts of the estate."

Again Lady Woodruffe took the alarm.

"Your heart is in the right place," she said, "and I cannot blame you for your charity; but you should reflect on what you are doing."

"I have done so."

"You cannot marry the girl."

"Why not? I would marry her if she would have me, for I never saw a more engaging, beautiful and fascinating girl in my life. Remember, mother, that when she was the rich and titled owner of Oak Hall you often urged me to make up to her."

"Ah! I did then, but everything is changed now."

"She is the same Ethel Arbuthnot."

"No indeed," said her ladyship; "she is poor and obscure now. You are young and handsome; you come of a good old family, and could marry any rich, titled lady in the county. Why throw yourself away on this girl?"

"Because I love her," answered Tom. "But it is no use talking. I am destined to be a blighted being, for I feel sure she loves another."

"I will find out from her to-morrow morning," replied his mother.

"Anyhow," continued Tom, with an air of determination, "she shall have Brook Cottage, and if I cannot be her husband, I will be her friend."

"Of course, I cannot hear any objection to that, though why you should make yourself miserable over a woman whom you have every reason to believe does not care for you passes my comprehension."

"The human heart, my dear mother, is a peculiar piece of mechanism. I scarcely understand it myself."

They parted soon after this and retired to their several chambers. In the morning Tom had an early breakfast and drove over to Morecambe to find Mrs. Arbuthnot, whom he intended to bring back to the cottage. On his way he had to pass this house, which was really a little sylvan paradise in the summer, though it looked bleak enough in winter. The snow had ceased to fall, but it lay thick and unbroken all over the country. The air was cold and keen, and large lumps of ice floated down the stream of the running brook.

The cottage was inhabited by an old woman, a pensioner of Tom's, who had put her in rent free to mind it, as it was only used when he entertained a fishing-party. Her name was Simmons; her husband had been a gamekeeper on the estate; he lost his wife one fatal night in an affray with poachers, and to console the widow, Tom had made her the keeper of the cottage, with a small weekly stipend to live upon. Stopping his horse at the gate of the garden, he called to the old woman.



"Mrs. Simmons, come out, I want to speak to you."

The door slowly opened and the aged crone appeared. "Good-day to you, sir, and heaven bless your honour this morning," she replied.

"I just wished to say that I shall send in some new furniture to-day," he continued, "and have the cottage elegantly fitted up."

"For the likes of me, sir! Lor bless you, the old sticks is good enough for me," she replied.

"Oh, no; I have let the cottage to a lady and her daughter. Don't look miserable. I shall not turn you out. It will be my special request that they employ you to cook for them and help them keep house generally."

The tears of gratitude came into the old woman's eyes.

"Thank you kindly, sir," she rejoined; "you always had a good heart, Master Tom, and there isn't one on the estate who will gain-say that."

Tom Woodruffe drove on, and going to a large furniture establishment, gave the proprietor an order to re-furnish the cottage that day and to take singing birds in cages, flowers in pots and stands, gold fish in bowls, a piano, handsome engravings for the walls, books of all kinds, any, everything that taste could suggest regardless of expense. The whole thing was to be done in a hurry, so that the cottage might be ready for occupation the next day.

Having accomplished this to his satisfaction, and feeling more in love than ever, he went to the workhouse and applied for permission to see Mrs. Arbuthnot, whom he found in much better health than he had expected. She was suffering from mental depression, and in part from want of sufficient nourishment, for on the scanty pay that Ethel received at the linen-draper's they could scarcely afford to buy the necessities of life, to say nothing of the luxuries.

He took her to a hotel where they had lunch, during which he unfolded his plans and told her all about Ethel. The old lady was delighted at this change in their fortune, and began to get better rapidly, for all she wanted was a little good news and encouragement. She, however, expressed her disinclination to go to Lady Woodruffe's, if it was only for one day and night, begging permission to stay at the hotel and be taken to the cottage when it was ready for occupation. Tom willingly acceded to this request, and promised to send a carriage for her on the following afternoon.

"You see," said Mrs. Arbuthnot, "your mother and me could never agree; we are too much alike; she is worldly and so am I. We should be sure to be saying things to one another which would make our intercourse disagreeable, so with your permission, Mr. Woodruffe, I'll stay here. Give my best love to Ethel, and accept my thanks. Ah, if we only had Oak Hall I should be happy."

Tom bade her be of good cheer, and keep her spirits up. There was no knowing what might happen in the whirligig of time. Anyhow, there was comfort in store for her, if not positive luxury. It was late in the day when he reached home, and his first inquiry was for Ethel. He was informed by his mother that she was weak and ill, and had remained in her room all day to avoid excitement, but would come down after dinner and spend the evening in the drawing-room. Tom was anxious to know if there was any hope for him, as he felt sure his mother had sounded Ethel during his absence.

"Did you speak to her, mother, on the subject we mentioned last night?" he asked.

"I did, my dear boy," was the reply.

Tom interrogated her with his eyes, for he did not dare to ask another question.

"I am sorry to say that there is no chance for you in that quarter," said Lady Woodruffe; "that is, I am sorry for you. As for myself, I am glad it should be so, as you will get over this passing fancy."

Tom smothered back a big cry, and a chok-

ing lump rose in his throat, while his heart became as heavy as lead.

"It was a delicate task for me to undertake," continued Lady Woodruffe, who saw how her son was suffering, and really felt for him.

"Yes, yes, go on," he said, with a heart-broken sigh.

"I questioned her closely as to the state of her affections. At first she was not inclined to be confidential. Unfortunately, I insulted her the last time we met at Oak Hall, and she had not forgotten it."

"Well?" he ejaculated.

"At length she admitted that her heart was not her own."

"She loves another?"

"She does, but who that other is I could not induce her to tell me. One thing is that you are perfectly safe."

"Perfectly miserable for life, you mean!" he exclaimed.

"Not so, my dear boy," answered his mother, making a clumsy effort to console him. "There are many agreeable young ladies, handsome and rich, of our acquaintance. Choose one and marry her."

Tom made a gesture of impatience.

"Will you never learn," he said, "that one cannot control the heart? It is in this particular girl that I want, and if I can't have her I will never marry!"

"Oh, yes, you will."

"Never!" he replied, resolutely. "To-morrow I shall sell my horses and go abroad for some months. I cannot bear to be near her."

"Then why did you bring her here?"

To this pertinent question Tom made no answer.

"At least I will learn my fate from her own lips," he said.

"It is useless."

"No matter, I will speak to her once."

This determination he carried out after dinner, when Ethel, pale, weak, but looking very lovely, entered the drawing-room. Lady Woodruffe discreetly retired, leaving them together. She was quite sure of her ground, and did not fear the issue.

"Are you better, Miss Arbuthnot?" he asked.

"Very much, thank you," she replied.

"I have good news for you."

"Indeed! that will be a novelty."

"I saw your mother to-day. She is at the hotel at Morecambe, and has called considerably. The cottage will be ready for your reception to-morrow."

Ethel's face brightened.

"Oh! you are so noble, so generous, so good," she cried. "How can I ever thank you, Mr. Woodruffe? I feel it impossible to make any return for your unexampled kindness."

"There is but one way," he said, as if talking to himself.

"Name it."

He rose, and then threw himself at her feet, seizing her hand in his and covering it with burning kisses.

"Love me, Ethel—love me! Say that you will marry me," he exclaimed.

"I cannot," she replied.

"Oh, heaven! You refuse me? Why are you so beautiful?"

"I could wish I were not. My beauty is fatal to men," she answered. Please rise, Mr. Woodruffe. I am not strong, and I cannot bear this painful scene."

He got up, and dashed the tears from his eyes.

"It is not painful to you," he said; "you do not suffer as I do."

"Believe me, I feel deeply for you. My heart has been torn and lacerated. I have been through the same agony. Indeed, I have borne my cross, and am bearing it now."

"You?"

"Yes. If you knew the secret of my heart you would pity me. Be brave, try and forget me."

"Can the heart that once truly loved ever forget?" he asked.

"Time softens everything. You will forgive

me for seeming cruel, will you not? Oh! how I wish this had not happened. I did not expect this," she said, bursting into tears.

Tom could bear no more of this scene, and seeing that his fate was sealed, he hastily quitted the room, which he did not enter again that night. The next day he was off and out again early. He carried out his intention of going abroad. All his horses were sold under the hammer, and he started for the Continent.

The steward saw Ethel and her mother installed at Brook Cottage, and there they felt at peace.

Ethel rapidly recovered her health, and so did Mrs. Arbuthnot; but the former was worried about Charles Palethorpe, from whom she had not heard for so long. She wrote him a long letter to the last address he had given her, which had the desired effect.

He had been seeking her but could find no clue in Morecambe, as the brutal landlady with whom she had resided did not know anything about her, and in answer to his inquiries, simply stated that she had gone away without leaving any address.

When he got her letter he hastened to Brook Cottage and was delighted to find them so comfortable, though he shuddered when he heard of all the trouble and poverty they had been compelled to go through.

Then, in his turn, he related how he had succeeded in his mission; how he had met the man he supposed to be Herbert Layton, and had slain him in an honourable duel, thus removing the only obstruction which existed to their union.

"I did not take any unfair advantage of him, Ethel," he said. "We met as one angry man should meet another, I gave him weapons. He was armed. It was his life or mine. An avenging Providence strengthened my hand and gave me power over him. He fell!"

"Is Herbert Layton really dead?" asked Ethel, all her past life coming back to her as in a dream.

"He is, and you are mine."

"Yes, Charles. It seems all very horrible; but since I have met you I have learnt to hate him. I am your darling, and in the happiness of the future may we learn forgetfulness of the bitter past."

"You love me?"

"I do."

He caught her in his strong, encircling arms, and held her there in a firm embrace, mute with unutterable bliss, raining kisses on her upturned face, while she sobbed like a child. Then he talked of his art, and what he intended to do encouraged by her affectionate smiles of approval, and how he would become a great artist; the world should ring with the fame of his name, and she should be proud of the man she had chosen for her husband.

They were very pretty day-dreams these, and the young people felt their hearts grow lighter as they indulged in them. There being now no obstacle to their union, it was arranged that they should be married in a fortnight's time at the little church in the country village, about a mile off.

As if to encourage them the wintry weather broke; the snow melted away as if by magic; the ice and frost disappeared, and the sun smiled upon the earth. One day a strange man was seen loitering about the house. Charles, who was painting in the parlour, saw him, and the sight of an unfamiliar face being an event in that secluded spot, he went out to speak to him.

"Are you in want of anything?" he asked.

"No," replied the stranger, "I am merely looking at the country. This is a pretty place. Who lives here?"

"Mrs. Arbuthnot, her daughter, and I, Charles Palethorpe."

"Indeed!" said the stranger. "I hear in the village there is to be a wedding the day after to-morrow."

"It is mine," said Charles.

"Do you marry Miss Arbuthnot?"

"Yes, sir," replied Charles; "I am the happy man."

The stranger smiled in a peculiarly cynical manner.

"Marriage is a lottery," he exclaimed. "I hope you will be happy. It is an event in a young man's life, and I beg permission to congratulate you."

"Thank you," answered Charles.

The man hurried away after this, as if he had gained all the information he wanted.

"Strange looking fellow," muttered Charles. "He seems like a detective."

The circumstance soon faded from his mind, as he heard Ethel playing on the piano one of the airs he loved so well, and he hastened into the room to turn over the leaves of her music for her.

"My darling, my precious one!" he whispered, as he smoothed her glossy hair. "How happy we shall be."

And she echoed the words. "How happy we shall be."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE MARRIAGE.

There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.  
OLD PROVERB.

BLITHELY the marriage bells were ringing. Once before Ethel had heard their merry sound, but alas! how soon they changed to a funeral note. She had been but the bride of an hour when she saw Herbert Layton commit the horrible crime which had caused her to separate from him, and had embittered her existence. Now all was changed.

The cloud had lifted from her young life, and she had learnt to love Charles Palethorpe, forgetting all about the bold, bad man whom she had once called her husband, but who in the cold grave could never be anything again to her. The ceremony was over. A few words uttered by the priest before the altar had made Ethel Arbuthnot and Charles Palethorpe man and wife.

There were no bridesmaids. Lady Woodruffe had studiously kept away. She never visited the inmates of Brook Cottage, for she hated Ethel more than ever, blaming her as the cause of her son's absence. Mrs. Arbuthnot was the only friend at the wedding. They had signed their names in the register. Charles had paid the minister's fees, and Ethel clinging to Charles's arm, was walking from the vestry to the carriage which was to convey them to their little rustic home.

Blithely the marriage bells were ringing. Their sweet music was full of promise of happiness in the future, and Ethel felt like the dove who found rest at last, after flying over the wild waste of waters. She looked very lovely in her bridal dress on that clear, bright winter morning, and the little crowd of villagers assembled outside the church raised a cheer as they made their appearance.

"Dearest Ethel," murmured Charles, "this is the proudest and happiest moment of my life."

She slightly pressed his arm and looked up in his face, while the misty expression of her eyes showed that her heart was too full for words. Suddenly in the porch they were confronted by a man. There was a relentless expression in his cold, pitiless gray eyes, and a hard smile sat on the corners of his well-cut mouth.

He was dressed in the extreme of fashion, and looked recklessly, daringly handsome. Rings of price sparkled on his hands, and a heavy gold locket studded with diamonds hung from his watch chain. Ethel no sooner saw him than she uttered a shriek, clinging like a timid and startled child to the arm of Charles Palethorpe, who was no less astonished than herself.

"Herbert Layton!" she gasped.

"Good heaven!" cried Charles, "does the grave give up its dead?"

It was Herbert Layton, handsome, smiling, reckless as ever.

"No," he replied, "it does not, I am happy to say!"

"Did we not fight on the sands, and did you not fall by my hand?"

"No!" again said Herbert, "you simply killed the wrong man, that is all."

"The wrong man?" gasped Charles Palethorpe, trembling all over, and turning pale as death.

"Yes."

"Who are you?"

"Myself," replied Herbert, with the stolidity of a sphinx.

"Who was it, then, that I killed?"

"Henry Carter Gordon!"

Charles staggered like a drunken man, and reeled against one of the pillars of the porch. Meanwhile Ethel was scarcely less agitated. She leant for support on her mother's arm, and her face was distorted with an unspeakable anguish.

"I shall die!" she muttered.

Herbert approached them, raising his hat gallantly.

"Allow me to escort you to your carriage?" he said.

Charles made an effort to recover himself, and looked as if he wished to interfere.

"Back!" cried Herbert, "I have business with you, sir."

"She is my wife!"

"I cannot see how that can be, when the lady married me!" said Herbert. "The fact of a woman's committing bigamy with a man does not give him a right in the eye of the law to call her his wife."

"In heaven's name," cried Charles, "who is her husband?"

"I am!" replied Herbert.

"And you are—"

"His Satanic Majesty, if you like. Come, ladies, the carriage is waiting. I regret that this scene should have occurred within the precincts of a sacred edifice, but it was unavoidable."

The mother and daughter, heavily stricken with grief, scarcely daring to breathe, unable to speak, walked to the carriage, the door of which was opened by Herbert. They entered; the door was shut.

"Home!" said Herbert.

The carriage was rapidly driven off, the villagers looked on in awe, open-mouthed, for they knew that something dreadful had happened, though they could not tell what. From Charles Palethorpe came a wail of anguish, as if he had heard his doom, and his knell was already ringing. Herbert returned to the porch. The parson had retired; the verger was in the vestry-room, and the two men were alone.

(To be Continued.)

## A FURNISHED ROOM.

"You see," said Mary, "we are always so short of money that I was very anxious mother should take a summer boarder, and thus eke out our scanty income. But how could we furnish the spare room? Nellie and I had just four pounds between us, which we had earned by knitting, and with that I undertook to furnish the room. First, I painted the floor dark brown. Upon this I laid down three braided mats which we had on hand. Then Nell and I brought our bedstead and mattresses down, and got brother Henry to nail up a wide, wooden bunk in our room, and we filled two ticks with straw, and put about ted quilts—which, of course we don't use after the weather becomes warm—over them, and our bed was ready for us. Then Henry cut down two barrels half way, leaving a back to them, and we put rope across for a seat, made nice cushions, and covered them both with blue cretonne. These were our easy chairs."

After that we covered a rough table entirely with blue cretonne, and put a white Marseilles covering over that. We bought some dotted muslin and made curtains, ruffling them both, and blue cretonne for lambrequins. The cretonne

was only a shilling a yard, and it took five yards and a half to make lambrequins for the two windows. Nell cut a pattern, and we soon had them made. We also covered two little stools to stand near the mantel, the mantel itself, and used eighteen yards of cretonne for covering everything. I made a large air-castle for one window, and Nell crocheted a cover for a broken goblet, put the goblet in, put four strings on it, and hung it up in the other window, of course putting tassels on the bottom. This, filled with wandering Jew, made a pretty hanging basket. We made cardboard brackets for the corners, ornamenting them with autumn leaves and ferns. We placed vases of flowers on the mantel.

Then, as we had twelve shillings left, we bought a large, wicker-work chair, and put a cushion of pale blue cretonne, well wadded, in it. Now the room looks lovely—is cool, neat and comfortable; and our boarder is perfectly satisfied with it."

## MODERN MARRIAGES.

Or late years, some rich papas with marriageable daughters have accepted penniless sons-in-law, rather than have none of any description, and all parties seem well satisfied with the arrangement. One of these fortunate husbands is a young curate, handsome, sweet, and with the loveliest of hands and feet, and he attends to the family worship in the most stylish manner, while the pretty new wife admits frankly that she cannot distinguish in her own little mind really to whom she is praying when dear Erakine's delicious voice is reading the service. She feels almost as much pride in his clerical household gowns and lappets as she does in her own dear bonnets and gloves. By-and-bye he may be fortunate enough to get a church, but until that time he will spend his time practising intoning on the parlour organ, shopping, walking and riding with his wife, and his father-in-law is to give him three pounds a week pocket money.

"I am tired of changes," exclaimed a young person who had secured a position as husband to a rich young woman. "One has no chance of becoming attached to an employer when the prospect of dismissal is always just ahead of a fellow who indulges himself in a bit of fun now and then. It is different with a wife. She forgives everything, if a man uses blarney delicately and in abundance, and she is not foolish. Not but that there are drawbacks when the wife retains the cheque-book. But that can't be helped legally in this country of too much consideration for women. And I shall do very well—in fact, have nothing to do but enjoy myself. Family pride, you see, stands in the way of my taking a clerkship, and family discretion, I am inclined to believe, hinders the parental purse from setting me up with capital. You see, the family head has perfect confidence in my integrity, but any belief in my business ability rests upon insecure foundations. All right. I cannot keep a coach, but I have a dog-cart and a trotting nag, and that must content me, I suppose."

And this conversation really occurred!

THE Queen of the Belgians will present to the future Queen of Spain a wedding veil of Flemish lace of the choicest workmanship, which is now being made at the girls' orphanage at Ghent.

TREASURE TROVE.—At Eymet (Dordogne) recently an innkeeper named Jean Constaude was digging up the stump of an old oak tree in his garden when his spade struck against a vase, which with its cover was shivered by the blow. The vessel was found to contain 600 silver pieces, each weighing upwards of 60 grains troy, and five gold coins of about 75 grains, all of them dating from the first century before the Christian era, their effigies being in a good state of preservation.





[A TERRIBLE SUSPICION.]

## UNDER A LOVE CHARM; OR,

### A SECRET WRONG.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"

"The Mystery of His Love; or, Who

Married Them?" &c., &c.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

##### SAVED.

I know a maiden fair to see;  
Beware!  
Trust her not—she is fooling thee.  
LONGFELLOW.

It was a maddening moment—a memory to haunt with its horror a restless, aching head, tossing on a fever pillow even after long years had passed away. Athelstane saw the hills and moors, whirling wildly round at the edges of the far horizon. His brain seemed on fire; his heart beat so that its loud thumps seemed to deafen his own ears; a mist came before his eyes; he must have been half insane for a few seconds, for he was filled with a fierce resolve of seeking death in the same fearful chasm towards which the frightened horse of Clemence was hurrying her if it fell out that he should not be able to arrest the animal's progress in time to save the girl's life.

How was he to do this? The horse Miss Melrose rode was mad with fright, and seemed as though he would outstrip the wind. Athelstane was close behind him, but could not get in front of him, do what he would, and there straight before them was the deadly, yawning, disused shaft!

All the while the wild shrieks of beautiful Clemence rang through the air. The poor girl

seemed to have lost entirely her daring courage and calmness; her cries added to the terror of the runaway horse. All at once there came a dark spot between the grey sky and the young lady on the horse.

Ah! Heaven be praised, it was another horseman advancing towards Clemence, and Athelstane thanks Heaven he has passed the pit; he sees the danger, and he rides straight at Miss Melrose and her horse, shouting at the very pitch of his clear, musical voice:

"Yes, Clemence is saved!"

Her horse swerved, turned, rushed towards Athelstane, who was advancing from the other side, and then, as if paralysed, stood stock still, trembling fearfully in every limb. Athelstane called to him in encouraging tones; the creature's senses seemed awakened; he dropped his head and advanced to meet his young master.

And Clemence—she was deadly white; her splendid eyes were full of a vague terror. Athelstane sprang from his horse just in time to receive the fainting girl in his arms.

"At last," he said to himself. "I feel my arms round her for the moment. This proud and beautiful and enchanting and cruel creature belongs to me."

He would have given Wolvermoor and all its broad acres at that moment had they belonged to him for the privilege of pressing his lips to those exquisite ones of Clemence, but then he knew he had no right, though he had sworn to make her his wife some day, no matter at what cost to himself.

It was a rash, a fatal vow, but he was "Under a Love Charm"; some spell was woven, and he for the time was powerless to break it, and meanwhile had he really the ghost of a chance of winning this young lady's heart? All this while he was bending over her as she lay on the grass where he had laid her in the proper position for a patient who has fainted, and he had taken off her gloves and was clasping her cold hands in his own.

How white, how still was that exquisite face,

and those eyes half closed! It was like death. Was it death—death from fear?

"Clemence! Clemence! would I had died for you."

He never knew if he had murmured those words with his lips, or if he had only given silent utterance to them in the depths of his own soul; but then, looking up, he saw, standing on the other side of Clemence, his very handsome brother Horace. The young officer's cheeks were flushed, and his eyes shone.

"By Jove! she is a million times handsomer than her photo," said Sir Robert's heir. "I saved her life, remember that, Athy. She belongs to me."

And Athelstane ground his teeth as he answered:

"I would rather see you dead!"

It was a violent, jealous speech. Athelstane regretted it the moment he had uttered it, not only because he found a certain pair of eyes fixed on him in alarm and displeasure, but because his own conscience told him quickly, as sensitive consciences will do under such circumstances, that he was wrong.

But Athelstane had not expected to see Sir Robert there. The fastidious baronet had arrived on the scene accompanied by his eldest daughter, Eva, quite unperceived by either of his nephews, so much were both of the young men engaged in attendance on Miss Melrose.

Sir Robert and Miss Rodney had ridden out together, and had happened to take the road over the moors which leads to Hazlemere, and then as they approached the disused shaft they recognised Horace ahead of them. Sir Robert was at this time very anxious to bring matters to a speedy conclusion and arrangement between the nephew whom he designed for his heir and his eldest daughter.

It struck him that during the course of that very morning's ride he would strive to find out how the land lay, and he said to Eva:

"Let us overtake Horace."

Accordingly they urged on their horses, and soon came close behind Mr. Horace Rodney,

who was not riding very fast, and then they perceived a young lady on a runaway horse at the other side of the yawning pit. Horace rode forward and intercepted the flight of the alarmed creature.

Sir Robert and Eva came up in time to be witnesses of the scene we have attempted to describe. Then Eva saw the passion-wrought face of her cousin Athelstane, who was dearer to her than any other mortal under the sun, and her heart burned hot within her. She, too, heard the wrathful, impetuous words which he spoke to his brother Horace; also, she had heard Horace boast that he had saved the beauty's life, and she saw that both of her cousins were madly in love with this beautiful belle of the London season.

Sir Robert thought little of the infatuation of Horace. He considered that his nephew was a young man who could change his sweethearts as easily as he changed his gloves. The baronet took the most prosaic views of love and marriage; but there was something in Athelstane's angry declaration that he would "rather see his brother dead" which shocked, nay, horrified Sir Robert.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, sir," said the baronet, sternly, to his nephew, who was not his favourite.

"I am," was the frank answer of Athelstane; "but Horace presumes too much."

At that moment Clemence opened her beautiful eyes and fixed them on Horace Rodney; then, in an instant, a smile flitted over her lovely mouth.

"I know who you are," she said, sweetly. "By your photograph you are Horace Rodney, and you saved my life."

As she spoke she extended her hand to Horace, who coloured and "felt like an idiot," as he said to himself. Horace had always boasted that he was not overburdened with sentiment; that he could as easily fall "out of love" as "in love;" but there was something in the kindling glances of this wonderful Clemence which set his soul on fire, and made his heart rage within him like some wild caged animal.

"I am better now," said Clemence, partly raising herself on her elbow, and looking still with a bright smile at Horace Rodney, taking meanwhile not the slightest notice of Athelstane, whose arm still supported her; "but I have you to thank always—you. I am not ungrateful, don't fear it. Ah! Sir Robert, I did not see you. I suppose I have been foolish enough to faint or something of the sort, have I not?"

And she laughed a musical laugh. The colour stole back to her cheeks; the sweet, clear colour like a damask rose. Eva, as in duty bound, extended her hand and expressed her pleasure at the escape of her beautiful visitor, and then Sir Robert asked:

"What had caused the horse to take fright?"

"I think it was a railway whistle—a most terrible shriek which the wind brought close to the poor fellow all at once," replied Miss Malrose, with her sweet, frank laugh. "You too, Mr. Athelstane?" she made a little haughty gesture of command which he understood to mean that he was to remove his arm which still supported her; and then she actually turned with eagerness towards the handsome guardman, Horace Rodney. "You will help me into the saddle, will you not, for you have saved my life? I owe it to you," the merciless coquette whispered, as Horace hastened to obey her.

Athelstane was deadly pale; he felt that he could almost have smitten Horace to the ground when Clemence smiled so sweetly on him, and when he had lifted her into the saddle, she actually leaned down and whispered—yes, whispered into his ear.

She turned round now with a smile, and in answer to the inquiry of Sir Robert as to whether she felt afraid to trust herself again on horseback she answered:

"Oh, no; not if Mr. Horace Rodney will ride by my side, I shall not feel in the least alarmed. You see he has absolutely saved my life."

"Cruel little tigress," said Athelstane to

himself; "she must know that she is driving me mad. Why are the fates so pitiless? Why could not I have saved her life? What a capricious chance was that which sent Horace to meet her, so that in the natural course of things his horse got between her and the embankment, while mine was powerless to overtake her mad-dened horse; she knows that, cruel little witch. Is she really smitten with Horace? I believe that she knows who is the villain in poor Margaret Bainston's story, and she is going to provide for her and her child. How then can she be so charmed with Horace? Is she so charmed? Is it not a trick? Is she not rather going to punish him in her own fashion for his wickedness towards another woman? But she hardly knows how difficult it will be to make my brother Horace suffer, except through wounded vanity or empty pockets."

Athelstane was silent, reserved and gloomy. Eva rode by his side, Sir Robert brought up the rear. The other two rode on in front, talking and laughing gaily. The wind brought the sound of their joyous voices to the ears of Athelstane.

He was now in a lane, narrow and deep sunk between two high banks on which grew some sturdy beech and sweet, sombre fir trees; the wind made a pitiful moaning amid them; the two gay young people in front were hidden by a bend in the road. Sir Robert was lagging behind. Suddenly Eva said:

"Athelstane, why do you give your heart to be trampled on by that coquette? She is the most perfectly heartless woman in creation. I am certain of it."

"She is kind to the poor, Eva," answered Athelstane. "I have seen her perform a noble act of charity this very day."

Eva Rodney smiled. We have elsewhere described this young lady. She was neither handsome nor plain; she had intelligent, soft dark eyes that could fire with indignation or flame with love or passion; she was rather short, and rather strongly built. Her complexion was brown, with rather a high colour; her hair was fine; her teeth were beautiful. She was the chief manager at Wolvermoor; she was energetic, strictly honourable, truthful to a degree, clever, well disposed, fond of power, but she cared more for her cousin Athelstane Rodney than for anything or anybody under the sun.

"A noble act of charity, Athelstane?" she said.

As she spoke she struck at some shrubs which grew on the bank impatiently with her riding whip.

"Has she sold her jewels and given the money to Margaret Bainston, who went away with Miss Singleton and returned in disgrace?"

Eva paused.

"I know the whole of that story," Eva continued, "and that Horace is the villain of the piece!"

"Good heavens!" began Athelstane; "what a shame that you should hear such a tale!"

"Oh, don't—don't talk nonsense to me, dear cousin," cried Eva, impatiently. "Am I not twenty-two, the doctress of all the poor people? Don't I know the world thoroughly?" (Poor Eva fancied that she did.) "Don't I know the world thoroughly?" the young lady continued, "and all the wickedness that goes on? Most men are vile wretches. Horace is a thorough scamp, and papa thinks I would marry him."

Miss Rodney curled her lip scornfully.

"I have had a letter from Margaret Bainston. I went to see her just before her child was born. She had heard that I was engaged to Horace, and she sent for me, thinking to set me against him. I listened to her tale without any other feelings than impatience and contempt—contempt for her as an idiot, and for the man as a knave. She was very violent. I told her that I had no sympathy with women who allowed men to deceive them. I said that she was quite mistaken in supposing that I was the affianced bride of my cousin. I told her that as for money, I always expended a certain sum yearly out of my own allowance on the poor on our own estate, and that I really had

very little to spare. I gave her what I could—a few shillings to buy clothes for the wretched expected child, and I told her that my father, Sir Robert, would be informed at the proper time of this most infamous conduct of his nephew and heir, and then I left her. All this happened more than a fortnight ago."

Eva cast restless and inquisitive glances at her cousin Athelstane while she was telling him this story of her strange experiences as the lady managers of the poor on her father's estate, and in the surrounding districts. If she could have known how completely she was alienating the young gentleman's sympathies from her, not to speak of his heart, while she gave him this exposition of her views and sentiments, she would have shrunk within herself; but although Eva loved Athelstane, she did not understand him. She had no idea how shocked he felt at her want of womanly softness, delicacy, and compassion.

He was not himself a demonstrative young man, except towards that wondrous Clemence, who had in some mysterious way put him "Under a Love Charm," and he never said very much about pity or sympathy, or maidenly modesty, or kindness.

Eva thought him noble and grand in soul, lofty in mind, gifted and manly and beautiful, with a masculine beauty, but she did not know how tender and compassionate his nature was. As for Athelstane, he had a theory, wise or unwise (let the reader of this story decide for himself), that you could not shirk folks by talking to them, and letting them know how shocked you felt at their selfishness or hard-heartedness, or want of delicacy.

"People are as they were made," he would say to himself, "and you only annoy them if you show them that you think them a little detestable."

Detestable! Eva! if she could only have known how many fathoms she had sunk now in the estimation of her cousin she would have been wild with mortification and grief.

"I am very sorry that you know all this," began Athelstane, after a pause.

"Why in the name of wonder?" asked Eva, impatiently. "Do you think me, then, still a schoolroom miss, who must not listen to a naughty tale? or is it because your dear brother Horace has acted like a scamp, and I know it? Let me tell you now once and for all, Athy, that I would not marry your brother Horace if he held the kingdom of England and the empire of India in his gift, not if he could make me queen and empress of the whole world to-morrow, not if he knelt at my feet, and swore that his whole life was to be devoted to me, I would never—never—never marry him!"

Her voice trembled with passionate earnestness. Athelstane said, quietly:

"Nobody can force you into a marriage against your will."

"Oh, don't talk commonplaces to me, if you please, cousin Athelstane," cried Miss Rodney. "I know all that. I am not a schoolgirl or a romantic miss who believes in the old tales of girls being compelled to marry men they hated. No, I have a strong will of my own, and papa knows that, so does my mother. I have never yet taken the trouble to tell them that I hated Horace Rodney. When they ask me to marry him it will be time enough to tell them that, but I tell you—you who don't seem to care if I marry him or the King of the Cannibal Islands, or some crossing sweeper from a London thoroughfare."

"I only wish you to please yourself, dear Eva," said Athelstane, with his calm smile and a far-away, dreamy look in his dark eyes that made poor Eva's heart ache. "I think you might marry many a man who would make you a more congenial husband than Horace would."

"How you talk," said Eva, and she lashed the bushes savagely with her riding whip, so that her horse started in alarm at the noise. "How you talk. Many a man indeed; then I am to marry half a dozen people, am I? And I who hate them all so much!"



Again she lashed the trees, but her horse took no notice this time.

"Then if that is the case, Eva, why should you marry? You like freedom; you have a fortune; you are strong-minded, self-reliant, can do without all the sentiments and whims and follies of love. It all reads to you, no doubt, like the nonsense in a child's book of fairy stories, and—"

"Stop, if you please," said Eva, hoarsely. She was crimson now, and her black eyes flashed. "I think you might have guessed if you had tried that I am not an icicle nor a wooden block any more than I am a rambling creature, all love sonnets and sighs and melancholy recollections. No, no, I am a woman with a loving heart, which I have given—yes, to a man who tramples it into the dust; but I would be that man's wife to-morrow and mend his stockings and cook his dinners and live with him in two poor rooms, and never look again upon the faces of my former friends, and still count myself the proudest, happiest woman under the sun."

"My dear Eva," said Athelstane, "how was I to know this? Who is the man, may I ask, that you so honour with your love?"

"You know him well," the girl answered, gloomily; "there is not a thought of his heart, not a secret wish of his soul that you do not know. Don't look incredulous, please. We understand each other perfectly. You hate me, I know it. Don't speak, please. I could not bear to hear your calm voice reasoning now. I have read all the coldness and bitterness and contempt of your soul in your eyes within the last ten minutes, and I don't wish to speak to you again except as to a stranger, for all the rest of my life, be that short or long."

As Eva spoke she urged her horse forward, but her cousin followed her up, and rode by her side.

"My dear Eva," he said, "don't hate me; don't think me a cold-hearted, ungrateful dog. You have a noble heart; soon some noble fellow will give you his in exchange for it. Forget all this. You must know that your secret is for ever locked in my own heart."

"If it had not been for that detestable girl," interrupted Eva, "you might have loved me; but you have given her your heart."

Athelstane tried to laugh; but his cousin stopped him.

"Don't," she said; "I have watched you and her, and I am sure of what I say. Oh, Athy, dear cousin, it is a pity you should love a girl like Clemence Melrose. I have tried to find out all about her. She is a wicked girl; she has a dreadful secret in her past. My maid has made friends with one of theirs, that red-haired girl called Anderson, she is the maid of Lady Melrose. Well, through her I heard of the sale of the jewels and of the visit of charity that your lady-love paid to-day. What a pity that her horse did not jump into the pit with her!"

"Great heaven, Eva, don't say such things," cried Athelstane; "you can't mean them."

"No, no, of course not," Miss Rodney answered, with a bitter laugh; "nothing of the kind. Do you think then, Athelstane, that I will dance at your wedding and wear a pink satin dress and a tiara of diamonds? I think if I kissed the fair bride I should bite a piece out of her pink, soft cheek. Ha! ha! ha!"

Long afterwards Athelstane recalled that wild speech of his cousin Eva with horror.

"Tell me," he said, "what have you heard of Miss Melrose?"

"You would not believe me if I told you," Eva answered, gloomily; "you would set it all down to my jealousy or the servant's gossip; but this I will say, beautiful and fascinating as she is, she is no wife for any honest man. She is a viper. If you cherish her in your breast she will sting you to death."

It seemed to Athelstane that a voice in his own soul echoed the strange words of his cousin Eva.

Nobody would have supposed for an instant that Miss Melrose had had such a narrow escape

of her life that day; nobody that watched her liveliness and the vivacious brilliancy of her charming manners during the evening that followed on the episode of the runaway horse and the charitable visit to the cottage of the Bains-tones.

Several more visitors had now arrived at Wolvermoor. The grand drawing-room was alive with guests who had all come in time for the eight o'clock dinner, and now music and refined, subdued laughter and gay young voices filled the salon.

Lady Rodney lay on her couch and conversed volubly with her guests. Lady Melrose was better that night than she had been at all since her arrival at Wolvermoor. There were half a dozen young officers, friends of Horace, present; there was a Lady Mayfield with her two daughters.

A vast deal of flirtation took place, but Clemence Melrose eclipsed every other woman in the room. It was like the moon and her satellites. All the men raved about her, not to the women, but to each other.

"Her eyes flash so that one feels an electric shock if she even looks this way," said young Lieutenant Foot of the Rifles to Athelstane Rodney. "Your brother seems to be making an impression, but—I have heard of her. She may only mean to madden him and drive him out of the country. I heard a fellow in the Tenth speaking of her. They say she laid a bet of a thousand guineas with the Marquis of Huntingfold—you know what a fellow for betting he is, separated from his wife, lives with that French actress, Rita—well, they say Miss Melrose made a bet with him of one thousand guineas that she would drive ten men out of the country or make them commit suicide by refusing to marry them within fifteen months. He wanted it done in the twelvemonth, but she said that she could not do it all in the year. Seven months are gone, and three fellows have gone away distracted, but she will have to make haste—eight months in which to make seven fellows weary of their lives. It is a cool thing for a woman to undertake, but there is a devilish light in those eyes at times; I am certain of it."

"A pack of lies!" cried Athelstane. "I am surprised, Foot, at your repeating such trash."

"Ah, he too is caught, is he?" young Foot said to himself, while Athelstane said to himself that that young dolt, Edward Foot, was vicious because Clemence had steadily ignored him ever since he had been in the house, and this was the truth.

Young Foot could not endure that the beauty should positively seem to be unaware of his very presence, and Clemence, who was most wonderfully quick at reading the various expressions on human faces, saw at a glance that the fair-haired young officer was filled with an inordinate and restless vanity, and that he would be annoyed and humiliated if she simply ignored him.

This she accordingly did. Athelstane, meanwhile, felt very much as if his love for Clemence Melrose would soon turn into hatred. As the days went on, she devoted herself more and more to Horace Rodney, and the effect on that young gentleman was simply intoxicating. By the end of three days this handsome pair and their flirtation were the talk of Wolvermoor, and even of the neighbourhood.

The parents of Clemence looked grave, yet not ill-pleased. Sir Robert and Lady Rodney, who saw their long-cherished scheme of uniting the fortunes of their daughter and their nephew likely to be set aside, scarcely knew whether to honour the engagement (for surely it would come to an engagement if it was not, one already) with their sanction or not. Certainly Clemence would have a fortune of some thousands a year in her own right.

In the course of a very few years, in all human probability, Lord Melrose would be the Earl of Hartbury, and Clemence would be Lady Clemence. It was a grand connection, one of the grandest in England. Horace had broken no faith with Eva Rodney; he had never been engaged to her, and the affections of that

strong-minded young lady had never turned towards her cousin Horace.

Taking all these circumstances into very deliberate consideration, Sir Robert and Lady Rodney came to the wise conclusion that they would not oppose what they could not prevent, and though not publicly announced, the engagement of Mr. Horace Rodney and Miss Clemence was soon considered as an accomplished fact.

Eva Rodney was in the highest spirits; she was delighted that the coquette about whom Athelstane had so nearly "gone mad," as she said to herself, was about to bestow her fortune and her charms on the man whom Eva herself despised; those two would be "out of the way." Athelstane would not continue to dream about his brother's wife. He knew the state of Eva's heart. Often his beautiful eyes rested on her with a sweet expression of kindness and gratitude that poor Eva fondly hoped might ripen into the warmer feeling.

Miss Rodney went about among the poor dispersing Christmas gifts with a more liberal hand and speaking gentler words than was her wont, and the lovers—were they lovers?—rode out together constantly in the frosty winter mornings, and played billiards together all the afternoon, and during the evenings sat apart from all the others talking, talking, talking, seeming oblivious of the presence of all the other guests.

Talking. What did they talk of while the world wondered at them and envied? Horace was haughtily contemptuous or insolently mocking in his manner towards his brother Athelstane.

"How was it? Why was it?" Athelstane asked himself the question fiercely in the solitude of his own chamber. Had Clemence set him on to insult Athelstane? Was the hideous story of her unwomanly bet with the unprincipled Marquis of Huntingfold a true one? and did she really wish to drive Athelstane Rodney to exile or self-destruction?

Meanwhile the days wagged merrily at Wolvermoor, so far as outward seeming went. Every evening there was a dance or Christmas games, and Celia Melrose flirted desperately with young Foot. Christmas Day passed without anything particular happening to mark it, and on the day following Eva announced during breakfast, to her father's guests, that it was her intention to institute private theatricals at Wolvermoor during the following week.

She said she hoped such of the visitors as liked acting would begin to study their parts and choose a good play. Eva added:

"I have already chosen my part, it is not an ambitious one."

"But if you have chosen it," said Lord Clonely, a newly-married peer, who, with his young wife, was spending the winter holidays in the Yorkshire mansion, "you can tell us what the piece will be. I, for one, shall be delighted, I am sure, although I am a muf at acting."

Eva laughed, and said gaily that it was all a joke.

"I wish you all to enjoy yourselves," said she, "and the weather is going to be terrible. Old Peters, the gardener, tells me there are great snowstorms coming up from the north, so that there will be no hunting for weeks, for you know how the snow lies out on these moors, so I have persuaded my good father to consent to our having a grand ball the first week in the new year, and then we must have a piece acted during the first part of the evening, and I want you all to choose your parts, and to fix what the piece is to be."

Soon there was a gay commotion among the visitors which lasted for several days. Nothing was talked of but the piece, first one, then another was chosen and rejected. Everybody in the house, even the elder people, Lord and Lady Melrose, Sir Robert and Lady Rodney, and Doctor Finquon seemed delighted at the prospect of the play.

The supper that was to follow the ball was to be on the most magnificent scale. Sir Robert, who in his heart liked pomp and show, sent for his family gold plate, which was kept for the greater part of the year in the bank at

York, and a couple of men cooks were to come down from London to superintend the preparations for the mighty feast.

There was a bluff young baronet, Sir Richard Gater, among the Wolvermoor visitors. He was hearty, good-natured, immensely rich, and he paid great attention to Eva. This pleased Sir Robert. If he could not marry his daughter to his nephew Sir Richard would be an excellent match for the spirited damsel, so Sir Robert waxed more cheerful.

Everybody in the house seemed pleased with one exception, and that exception was Athelstane Rodney. In the years that came he always recalled that first week in the dark and snowy new year as the most gloomy time in his whole life.

Clemence, and only Clemence, filled his soul night and day. He had always feared that if his brother Horace won her for his bride, the anguish of his jealousy would drive him mad, and now this which he had so dreaded had happened, was daily happening, under his eyes.

Clemence seldom gave him a word or a look now, and whenever she did, they were of the coldest. As for Horace, he seemed to be in a state of pleased excitement; but still—

"Surely Clemence kept him partly in suspense?"

"They were not absolutely engaged, were they?"

People asked each other these questions, but nobody seemed able to answer them. The play fixed on was the "Colleen Bawn." Clemence was not going to act in it, but there was to be a ridiculous farce, called "The Straw Hat," before the real business of the evening began, and in this there were to be three actors, Clemence, Horace, and Lady Clonelly, the newly-married countess.

This lady was to take the part of the servant. Above two hundred guests were expected to arrive at Wolvermoor that evening. The acting was to begin at half-past eight. Athelstane Rodney had positively refused to take any part in the performance. He said, with a gloomy smile, to Eva, that he detested theatricals, and above all the acting of amateurs.

It was four o'clock of the wintry afternoon; snow had been falling heavily for days; the moors were covered with a thick white carpet; the heavens were lurid in their black and sombre gloom; there was a bitter, biting wind from the north. Eva, in her rich ruby velvet dress, with her collar of pure gold and dainty white lace ruff, stood at the window of a little room called the study, which looked into a rather wild portion of Wolvermoor Park; a sort of thicket of rhododendrons and other flowering shrubs divided the park from that part of the gardens, and in the summer was picturesque; but now the whole was a mass of snow.

A fire burnt brightly in the little grate. But how was it Eva's hands were cold, and there was a strange fear and sinking at her heart, while she asked herself if she were well? told herself that the house was full of guests, and that very night was the night of the acting and the brilliant ball and the great supper, and that she must rouse herself and shake off those melancholy thoughts about Athelstane.

The hero of her dreams passed the window—passed, and never looked. She tapped at the window; she opened it and called, but Athelstane never turned his head; he seemed not to have heard her; he was very pale, she thought, and he wore no hat, no overcoat.

Was he mad for the love of that cruel, worthless coquette? All sorts of vague fears filled the young lady's mind. She was, as we know, strong-minded. Why should she not put a hood over her head, a cloak over her shoulders, and follow Athelstane, and tell him what a storm was coming on, and that they dined early that day?

"How sorry I am that I persuaded my father to give this entertainment. I thought it would have pleased Athelstane. Instead of that it seems to disgust him. I suppose he can't bear to see that girl and Horace act together. I will follow him, he looked so strange."

And Eva brought a cloak with a hood in which she enveloped herself, and thus equipped she stole out by a side door just as dusk was falling. How keen was the wind; her heart sank, but she went on, for just ahead, under some bushes, she saw a dark figure moving; she went forward; the pale moon was rising over the white trees as she came up to that still moving form. Her thoughts were full of Athelstane; but the next moment she stood stock still, struck dumb by a great horror!

(To be Continued.)

## PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

### THE DRAMA.

ABUNDANCE of amusement is now afforded at the numerous houses of theatrical entertainment, and every variety of taste may be gratified by consulting the programmes of each establishment. At Covent Garden Riviere's Promenade Concerts continue to delight the lovers of music. The admirers of a sensation scene are thrilled by the drama of "Rescued," at the Adelphi. "The Iron Chest" at the Lyceum delights the staunch supporters of Mr. Irving; and attractive performances continue at the St. James's, Olympic, Strand, Prince of Wales's, Globe, Vaudeville, Opera Comique, Princess's and Royalty. The Court has varied its programme by the production of a new comedieta, called "A Clerical Error," and Mr. Byron's new comedy of "Courtship." The Alhambra and the Criterion flourish with "La Petite Made-moiselle," and "Betsy." At the Imperial "The Beaux' Stratagem" has been succeeded by "The Poor Gentleman." The Duke's is prosperously running on "New Babylon." New Sadler's Wells has been crowded since the opening night, and the revival of "Rob Roy" is increasing in attraction. The Philharmonic, Islington, is thriving with its pleasantly varied entertainment.

### THE LONDON PAVILION.

Goop audiences are the rule here. Mrs. and Miss Brian sing that curious composition commencing, "I love my love with an A," and taking that love all the way through the alphabetical list. The song, or duet, is indeed a specimen, or rather a series of specimens, of amusing love letters. It was first heard, if we remember rightly, in connection with one of Mr. Byron's burlesques at the Gaiety. It was very well rendered by the two artists we have named, and appeared to give general satisfaction. Messrs. De Voy, Le Clerq, Butler, and Tom Lovell cause uproarious laughter in a mad sketch, the merriment reaching the culminating point when the funny little man of the party, who had rashly undertaken the charge of a lunatic about six feet four in height, came to the front half blind, lame, battered, bruised, and bandaged, accompanied by his dog, which appeared to be in a similarly sorry plight. Acrobatic and contortionist feats were furnished by Messrs. Jackley and Garnett. The somersaults of the former are remarkable. Mr. Sidney Franks proved welcome in a song concerning somebody whose name was B-r-o-w-n, and also appeared as an "Undertaker's Man." Miss Nelly Power's singing in the pleasing sketch called "The Rhine and the Rhino," finds deserved favour. Mr. Russel Grover occupies the chair.

### THE OXFORD.

A new musical extravaganza, "Egyptonia," has been produced at the Oxford by Mr. Jennings, who, on the first night, was called before the curtain. The refusal of the magistrates to allow dancing—a decision which a dispassionate observer will fail to understand, inasmuch as

dancing at this Hall has invariably been introduced with moderation and decorum—somewhat marred the spectacle; but the musical features were well rendered, and everyone concerned looked and did their best. The "Three Jolly Coons" are alone worth a visit.

M. MIKESWINSKI, the new tenor, has made his debut at the Opéra, in Paris, as Arnold, in "Guillaume Tell."

CAMDEN HOUSE, Chislehurst—a mansion associated with the melancholy vicissitudes of the last reigning branch of the Bonapartists—is, it is said, soon to be tenanted. Anxious to live in absolute retirement, and to add to the strictest seclusion those pleasant religious associations and surroundings which a convent is said to afford, the Empress Eugénie has definitely resolved to assume the veil. It will be a positive relief to Her Majesty to leave a mansion full of such sad memories as Camden House.

### MANAGEMENT OF INFANTS.

WHEN a child is about to have the measles—a disease not dangerous in its ordinary form—he will be heavy, drowsy, hot, and feverish, having to all appearance a very heavy cold upon him. His eyes will be more or less inflamed and watery-looking, his voice hoarse, and there will be considerable running from the nose. He will cough frequently and complain of headache, and, although his skin may be very hot and dry, he will now and then feel chilly. In two or three days all this will violently increase, and do not be too much alarmed—as it is a very usual thing—if towards evening he becomes a little delirious.

Four or five days after the first symptoms described the rash usually makes its appearance, small red spots like flea bites, which at first come distinct from each other, but which soon thickly increase and cover the whole of the body, legs and feet excepted. About the sixth day the eruption begins to fade from the face and is out upon the extremities. In fading the spots drop off, like bran in appearance. Although, as we have said, this disease is not dangerous generally speaking, it is often made so by carelessness in not attending rigidly to the doctor's instructions. Therefore do not let your child's life now be in the hands of any mere inexperienced attendant. If you cannot attend upon him yourself, obtain good, reliable assistance.

Put him to bed directly you have come to the conclusion that he is going to have the measles, not heaping clothes upon him, as some will advise, but putting just enough to keep him comfortably warm. And let the sick-room be the largest, airiest one you have in the house—darkened. Give scarcely any food. What is taken should be warm and liquid, but he may drink plentifully of barley water, very thin gruel, etc.

You may bathe the chest, arms, hands, and face with vinegar and water (warm), one-fourth of the former to three-fourths of the latter. This malady is "catching," so be doubly careful with your little one if it is in your neighbourhood.

Also bear well in mind that after a child has suffered with it he will be very delicate for some time, and must be carefully guarded from cold and damp. A cough will be almost sure to follow, and this must not be allowed to take its own course. The doctor must take it in hand.

Scarlet fever and scarlatina are not one and the same thing, but by the laity should be treated in the same way. They somewhat resemble measles, and may be placed under the same general treatment, at first. They begin (and we have only to do with beginnings) with feverish symptoms, sometimes so slight, however, that not much notice is taken of them. The rash usually comes at the second day, specks of



a bright red colour on face, neck and chest; on the third day it will spread itself all over the body.

Sometimes much soreness of the throat accompanies this disease; it is then more alarming. Remember that you may readily distinguish between the measles and the scarlet fever thus: the latter has no cough, no running at the nose and eyes, usually, nor are the eyes inflamed and watery, which are the leading symptoms in measles at an early stage.

Inflammation is the hidden foe to be staved off in scarlet fever—quick to come, but easy to prevent by excessive watchfulness and care.

When the patient is exceedingly hot, the skin being dry, sponge him all over the surface of his body with vinegar and water. This will refresh him wonderfully, and may be done again and again. No animal food must be given, but cooling drinks, thin gruel, oranges, grapes, etc., sweetened (the juice only).

This disease is contagious, and the contagion will lurk in the bedding, carpets, and furniture, and of course also in the child's clothes. So remove as much of the former as you can do without. Take every scrap of carpet away from the room, and soiled linen as it is replenished from time to time with fresh should be plunged into boiling water immediately. Disinfectants ought to be used, and when the patient is quite recovered, at least so as to be able to leave his bedroom, if possible let it be whitewashed and re-papered.

Worms are a very disagreeable and common plague to children. Baby fed naturally is seldom troubled with them, but when reared "by hand" will sometimes have them. Sloppy, ill-cooked food will bring them rapidly, and therefore this is another urgent reason to exercise the greatest of care in the preparation of what you give him to eat.

Children with worms are fretful, "picksome," ravenously hungry sometimes, and at others will refuse their food. Sugar, though a most useful condiment to give them as occasion requires, will produce worms if not used with discretion. So also will gingerbread, common sweetstuff, and unripe fruits. Encourage them to eat salt freely with their food—it is an excellent preventative. A remedy is a few—say six—common dried grapes or raisins eaten while in a fasting state in the morning before breakfast. We mention the number because this fruit is very unwholesome for children, or, indeed, for grown-up persons. Eaten in large quantities they disorder the digestive organs to a great extent.

## THE COST OF CORA'S LOVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl,"

"Poor Leo," "Bound to the Travel,"

"Fringed with Fire," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XXXVII.

#### THEIR LAST MEETING.

In his whole figure and his mien  
A savage character was seen.  
Of mountains and of dreary moors.

As Walter walked towards the Strada del Rey to obey the summons sent him by Castellaro, he could not help observing that the streets wore an appearance of unwonted excitement, that detachments of soldiers were marching about, while half a battalion occupied the principal square. For this was on the 22nd of July, 1872, and, though our hero was unconscious of the fact, insurgent soldiers were at this very moment on their way to the palace of the President Balta, headed by Don Thomas Gutierrez, the minister of war, a cousin and confederate of

Castellaro, who had now taken up his quarters in the city.

How the president was made prisoner and condemned to death, and how for the three succeeding days the city of Lima suffered all the horrors of a reign of terror, are matters of history, and also how the Admiral of the British Fleet, then lying at Callao, and the captains of all English vessels, offered refuge to women and children of all ranks and nationalities.

The revolution which had been long smouldering and gathering strength under such men as Castellaro, had now burst forth, and men's worst passions had come to the surface, and, like streams of molten lava from a volcano, were carrying death and desolation in their course. Unconscious of all this, but feeling that some strange and unaccountable disturbance was in the air, Walter made his way to the red house mentioned in the note he had received and knocked at the door.

There was a long pause, and he was about to repeat his summons when the door was opened softly, and a villanous-looking half-caste asked in a surly tone, "Whom seek you?"

"Don Roderigo de Castellaro," was the reply.

"Enter," said the man.

The next minute Walter stood in the passage in utter darkness with the door closed between him and the street. For the first time he began to realise the imprudence, not to say foolhardiness, of the step he had taken.

The thought flashed through his mind that his life was precious to many loved ones, and that he had no right to put it thus in needless danger at the caprice of the man who had murdered his father.

Since Masson had given him the information about Lord William Lyster, he had had a conversation with his uncle, and together they had carefully examined the papers in the possession of Mr. Marsden, sen., the result being that both were convinced that Lord Lamorna's brother had been Walter's own father, and he felt, therefore, that a far greater responsibility rested upon him now than had been the case before, and it behoved him to be doubly careful not to incur any unnecessary risks.

Still he reflected he could not break his word; that, for a man of honour, was impossible; but, nevertheless, it occurred to him now that it was too late that his promise to meet Castellaro would still have been kept if he had had the sense to bring Dick and one or two others with him as a kind of bodyguard. These thoughts flashed through his mind as he stood in the dark passage, but they came too late to be of any practical use, and the voice of the man who had admitted him now desired him to follow.

Touching the wall with both hands so that he might not stumble, Walter obeyed, and after proceeding a few steps the door of a room unusually large and spacious, and brilliantly lighted, was thrown open, and he was desired to enter, the door being immediately closed behind him.

In some surprise he looked about and discovered that he was alone. There was no little difference between this room and the miserable hut in which he and Castellaro had last met.

There all was poverty, dirt and squalor, here everything was rich and splendid, but it was costly without taste, and indicated vulgar ostentation rather than refinement or comfort. The French furniture was covered with pale blue satin, while the frame-work was richly gilded, and all the surroundings contrasted strangely with the shabbiness of the carpet on which the chairs, tables and couches stood.

Walter had scarcely had time to notice all this when the rustle of silk made him look up, and to his astonishment he saw Inez de Castellaro standing before him. The blood mounted hotly to his face, his eyes flashed with anger, his lip curled with something like scorn, and he only responded to her smiles with the stiffest of bows as he said:

"I had no expectation of meeting you here, senora."

"No," she replied, ignoring his coolness; "probably not, but I am at home here. You know I am a Castellaro, and though for my mother's sake I sometimes reside in the house of Mr. Marsden, I do not belong to his family."

Walter inclined his head with grave and cool politeness. This woman's beauty had no attraction for him, while the thought that an effort might be made to induce or compel him to marry her, irritated him so much as to make him absolutely dislike her.

With the keen perceptive faculty of her sex, Inez saw what was passing in his mind, saw that it might be fatal to the success of her scheme, and she determined to assume the character of a victim to the overbearing dictation of an imperious relative.

"My uncle intended to be here this evening," she said with some embarrassment as she played nervously with her fan; "he sent me a command to be here," she went on; "but," with more hesitation, "something unexpected has happened, he was called away and he desired me to await his return, and I was to ask you to wait also?"

"I trust Don Roderigo will not be very long," said Walter, with a contraction of the brows. "I am only here because a promise was extracted from me that I would come when sent for, and if I am kept long waiting I shall feel myself absolved from my engagement."

Inez looked at him critically from under her long eyelashes, then she said:

"I hope you don't blame me in any way for my uncle's eccentricities. I am utterly helpless in his hands; he stands to me in the place of a father; what he says I am to do, I must do; pray don't associate me with any resentment you may have against him."

"There can be no connection in my mind between you and the business that brought me here to-night, senora," returned Walter, with frigid politeness. "I came here to treat with the man who murdered my father for the surrender to me of a box of papers, which he at the same time stole from my father's house. Of course it would be more spirited to avenge my father's death by taking the life of the man who assassinated him, but except in self-defence I do not care to soil my hands with a murderer's blood. I am willing, however, to pay a considerable sum of money for those stolen papers, although I doubt if they can tell me anything that I do not already know?"

The girl's face had flushed and darkened as she listened to the insulting epithets applied so unceremoniously by Walter to her uncle and his actions, but his closing words quite changed the current of her thoughts and threw her entirely off her guard.

"You know the secret of those papers?" she cried in undisguised astonishment and dismay. "You know who your father was?"

"Yes. The documents have lost much of their importance during the last six months, for the facts to which they relate have come to light without them, and now the only use of the papers is to enable me to make assurance doubly sure."

Inez felt her face turn suddenly pale and cold, she clenched her hands, which were now damp and clammy, and her heart sank in her breast like lead. For it was upon the possession of the secret which she thought could only become known to Walter through the medium of these papers that she had built her last hopes.

"Surely," she had reasoned, "his heart will soften towards me when he knows that he not only owes his life and safety to my great love for him, but also rank and wealth and power, and all that the heart of man holds highest. Yes. He cannot help being grateful and kind, and kindness will soon ripen into love."

But now she felt that the ground was cut away from under her feet, he already knew all that she could tell him, and nothing she could say or do would have the least effect upon him or his fortunes. Except,—ah, she had power to punish if not to win, and a cruel gleam came into her eyes as the thought flashed through

her brain. "Castellaro would return soon, and a word from her would be the death warrant of the rash youth who had scorned a woman's love." But then, on the other hand, although he despised and rejected her she loved him with all the fierce passion of her race.

There were moments when he was at little pains to conceal the dislike and aversion he felt for her, and at such times she could have slain him with her own hand gladly, but that was a very different thing from dooming him she loved so fondly to die in cold blood at the hands of another.

The struggle in her heart was a bitter one—fiercest love and fiercest hate fought there for mastery. All thought of hiding her feelings was at an end, and she so trembled with excitement that Walter out of mere kindness poured her out a glass of water. This little act of courtesy turned the scale in his favour.

The struggle was over, and a strange change came over the excited girl.

Her face was still a trifle pale, but never in her life had she looked so lovely as she did at this moment, when she came to Walter's side, and resting her small hand on his arm said in low, fearful, impressive tones:

"Fly! Fly for your life; get out of the city, get on board an English ship, and as you value your life never come back again."

"But why? Surely—" he began.

She interrupted him rapidly, and with fearful earnestness by saying:

"Ask no questions; lose not a moment. A revolution has broken out; by this time the president is a prisoner or dead, my uncle and his cousin will be supreme, and Don Rodrigo will shoot you like a dog if you oppose his lightest whim. Fly! fly! by the window—not by the door. Fly for your life or you will be too late!"

"But, Inez—tell me," began Walter.

"It is too late!" said the girl with a white face and an awful shudder as she retreated to a chair. "He is coming!"

Walter heard a heavy footstep and the sound of voices in the passage, and immediately he took his stand against a large cabinet, and put his right hand into his pocket, and grasped a revolver, determined to sell his life dearly if matters came to extremities. Scarcely had he taken up this position when the door opened and Castellaro, flushed and excited with recent triumph, strode haughtily into the room. He had at least one companion outside, for he said something in a low tone before closing the door, then, addressing himself to Inez, he said:

"Victory, niece. Balta is in our hands; he will be executed to-morrow; I have no time to spare. Now, have you and the caballero come to terms? Shall I call in the priest?"

"No, I have changed my mind, give him his papers and let him go," replied Inez with an effort to assume her old proud tone and manner.

"Go!" with a bitter laugh; "he will go the way his father went if you do not save him; but for you I had kept my oath and swept him off the face of the earth long ago."

"I will not have him touched. I claim him. If I do not choose to marry him that is my business; give me the papers and leave me to settle it," exclaimed Inez, roused by Walter's peril to defend him.

"Look you, girl," returned Castellaro, sternly, "time presses, and I will have no fooling. There are the papers," flinging a small box on the table; "and here," producing a pistol, is something else; if you two do not tell me within three minutes that you are ready to be married without delay, I shall end the matter in a fashion of my own."

Walter was pale, his revolver was ready, and yet he hesitated to use it, for Inez had flung herself before Castellaro, entreating that he would give her time, that at least he would wait till the morning.

But the fierce old savage, flushed with the success of his recent treason, conscious that he carried his life in his hand, not knowing what an hour might bring forth, and eager to be back with his lawless companions to finish the work they

had so successfully begun, was in no humour to listen to the pleading of a woman who for some feminine freak or other wanted now to throw away what she had lately tormented him to obtain for her.

"Two minutes gone!" he shouted, with ill-repressed impatience, then, looking at Walter he asked: "Are you ready to obey me if she consents?"

"No," was the firm reply.

The next instant there was the report of a pistol, followed immediately by a second, and then a simultaneous cry of horror burst from both men, for Inez had flung herself before her uncle as he levelled his pistol at Walter's heart and the bullet intended for him had lodged in her own breast. Castellaro's diadem had made him bend suddenly forward, and thus it was that Walter's ball missed its aim.

The shots might have been preconcerted signals, for scarcely had the sound died away and before either of the men could utter a word or do anything for the prostrate girl, two parties of men rushed upon the scene, one entered through the doorway, the other through the windows, and but that big Nell leaped into the room with the latter, Walter would not have known who were his friends and who were his foes.

And now ensued a scene which baffles all description. Shots were fired, knives were brandished, the gaudily furnished room soon looked like a slaughter-house, and still, towering above them all, stood Castellaro, fighting like an old wolf at bay, wounded but not conquered, while Walter and Dick, hardly beset, fought for their very lives, and poor Nell, who had more than once assisted her master, was bleeding from an ugly gash which she had received on her shoulder, though she still did good service with those powerful jaws of hers.

Castellaro's party was the largest, and Walter's, urged on by Dick, the most determined. Fiercely the conflict raged in the confined space, the combatants could hardly distinguish friend from foe. Inez lay on the ground, insensible or dead; men, some dead, some dying, and some desperately wounded, lay all about, and still the fight went on, for the leaders, though wounded, continued to struggle fiercely to get at each other.

Suddenly upon the ears of the combatants fell a sound like the regular tramp tramp of soldiers at quick march. Castellaro's face lighted up with a gleam of cruel triumph, the coming force would be on his side and to him would be the victory. There was a pause. Then, from the garden, by the way Dick and his friends had entered, was heard the ringing sound of a British cheer.

"The sailors!" said Dick to his cousin, with a hopeful smile.

Walter made no reply. A shot from Castellaro, better aimed than those that had preceded it, brought him at that instant to the ground. Scarcely knowing what he did in the intense excitement of the moment, Dick Marsden deliberately took aim at Castellaro's head, and fired.

That was the death warrant of the bandit and rebel, but Dick was unconscious of what he had done, for as he touched the trigger a heavy blow on the head stunned him, and when he again became conscious, he was out in the night air, the calm bright stars were shining down upon him, while Quinto with an anxious face was bathing his head with cold water.

"Where is my cousin?" was Dick's first question.

"Are you better, senior?" asked Quinto, evasively.

"I am all right, where is my cousin? Why don't you answer me? Is he alive or dead?"

"I've got the box of papers, senior?" said Quinto, displaying the small iron box that had so long been in the wrong hands.

"Confound you, answer my question; is my cousin alive?"

"No, senior, he is dead." Dick Marsden heard no more. He fell back senseless and in this condition he was taken to his father's house.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### LORD WILLIAM'S PORTENT.

Over the sea, over the sea,  
Somebody's coming, is coming for me.

LADY BELINDA LYSTER was deeply moved; her heart seemed too large for her shrivelled frame to contain it; her breath came thick and fast, her pulses throbbed, and the withered hand that held the letter she had been reading trembled with excitement. The honour of the Lysters was dearer to her than her own life, and the thought that so unworthy a representative of her family as Lance Latimer was all that was left to inherit that honour had been a bitter and increasing grief to her.

Now, this letter from Walter that had just come to hand convinced her that her instincts were not at fault when, at their first meeting, the fancy took possession of her that Walter "Smith," as he was called, was the son of her lost brother. The young man's mother's account of her husband, and the total absence of any confirmation of the idea which his likeness to her brother had suggested, had, for the time being, convinced the old lady that she was mistaken, and that in her anxiety that there should be a direct heir to the marquise of Lamorna she was imagining a condition of things that was impossible.

Even now, Walter's letter was cautious in the extreme. After speaking of the commission entrusted to him by the Marquis to find the lost Lord William Lyster, or to obtain proof of his death, and evidence as to whether he was married and had left any children.

The writer went on to explain how he had engaged a man named Masson to hunt up information for him, and then, as briefly and concisely as possible, he detailed what facts the Yankee detective had discovered, and the conclusions that the evidence tended to establish.

"If this is really so," Walter went on to write, "and all I can learn by diligent personal examination seems to strengthen the probability of it, then, dear Lady Belinda, your lost brother was my murdered father and I am your nephew. How I hope this may be true, I need not say; but I shall not feel perfectly satisfied in my own mind until I have obtained possession of certain papers which were carried off by the assassin, and which my father was about to show to my mother, with a view to explaining to her his real position, at the very moment when Castellaro, with an armed band of lawless followers, broke into the house and killed him. My mother believed that those papers contained the solution of some mystery which surrounded my father's antecedents, but she never spoke to me either of that or of the manner of his death, or even alluded to the existence of these papers until I announced my intention of going to Peru. The revelation was made to me by her in the hope of disabbling me from my purpose, but of course it had the effect of giving me a fresh motive for coming here. I have already met this Castellaro once, and heard from his own lips that he has these papers still. I shall shortly meet him again, and it will go hard with me if I do not force him to surrender them. I leave it for you to decide whether you will speak of this matter to anyone for the present or wait for further evidence. I have not written to my mother on the subject, and I have referred Cora to you for details, as I am writing hurriedly to catch the mail, but directly I have further proof I will write again."

So ended this letter, which showed very clearly that the urgent missives sent to him requesting his immediate return to England had never reached his hands.

"Proof! I need no more proof," exclaimed Lady Belinda, her face beaming with happiness. "But why doesn't he come home? He cannot know how much we want him, and now, with sudden terror, "if he should get into danger, if he should be killed as his father was, it will be worse than if we had never heard of him or known my poor brother's fate."

Then her eyes fell upon Dick Marsden's letter, which she had not noticed before. The



post-mark startled her, however, and she tore it open and read it eagerly.

"It is as I feared," she moaned. "There is danger to be apprehended from a meeting with that man; no time is to be lost, I must send for Cadbury, he will know if I can telegraph the whole, or part of the way; and if he approves, I will yield to the advice of the surgeons, and let them operate upon my brother without further delay. If the operation is successful, and Walter returns to us in safety, all will be well."

Tears came into her eyes, and she almost sobbed as this new vista of possible peace and love opened out before her. What a contrast it presented to the incessant grief and anxiety that had been her portion for so many months. But this was no time for idle dreams, the fruition of her hopes was still far distant; between that possibility and the present time lay snares and dangers beyond number, and it behoved her to rouse herself to instant action, and keep all her wits about her. She sent off a messenger for the doctor, and he was hardly gone before Cora, with her face flushed and an expression of happiness upon her countenance that had been a stranger to it of late, hurried into the room with an open letter in her hand, exclaiming:

"Walter cannot have received our last letters, auntie, for he never alludes to them, but he tells me that something wonderful has happened to him, that he has learnt something about his father and Uncle William, and that directly he has secured some papers he hopes to find he shall start for England; but he says you can explain what he means."

Lady Bellinda burst into tears. Pain, anxiety, grief, anger and disappointment had not succeeded in wringing one tear from those proud old eyes, but her present feelings utterly overcame her, and she hid her face and sobbed upon the shoulder of the perplexed girl who was doing all she could to console her. At length the old lady looked up with a smile like sunshine in a rainy sky and said:

"Tears of hope and joy have been strangers to me for many a long year, my dear, and my nerves have been unstrung by the news I have just received. I could only see humiliation and trouble before us, and now our dear Walter sends me word that my lost brother was actually his father, and my heart is so full that it seems as though it would burst with joy."

"I am very glad of your happiness, auntie dear," said the girl, "and if dear papa recovers to find a nephew it will make him beside himself with joy; but," suddenly bursting into tears, "what is to become of me, what shall I do? How can I give him up?"

"Give up Walter!" repeated her ladyship, opening her eyes in amazement, "surely you don't object to be the future Marchioness of Lamorna."

"Oh, auntie, he can't marry me. I am nobody, worse than nobody, for that dreadful woman who claims me may really be my mother. Tell me there is some mistake! oh, tell me that there is. Surely all I love need not thus be taken from me!"

"Why what is the matter with the girl?" asked Lady Bellinda, utterly at a loss to comprehend this new difficulty. "Here I tell her that the man she loves and who loves her is rich instead of poor, a man of family and position instead of a mere nobody, and she begins to protest and whimper as though she were the most illused girl alive. Seriously, Cora, do you think you are quite sane?"

"Auntie dear, you know what I mean. You and papa love me dearly, and so does Walter, and how could I bring disgrace upon you all, in return for the love and tenderness you have shown me. Until this woman came and said I was her child I never thought of these things, for papa had always been like a real father to me, and you had been as kind and loving as any mother, so that if I had not loved Walter so dearly I might have thought I was too far above him in the social scale to allow of my marrying him. But now all this is changed. Perhaps I

belong to somebody who may have done what would bring disgrace or discredit upon my husband and his family, and even Walter himself, when he knows what has happened, may hesitate to marry me."

Lady Bellinda had gradually divined, while Cora was speaking, the course the girl's thoughts had taken and now she said with assumed severity:

"I never should have thought you were conceited enough to suppose that you had a monopoly of disinterested affection, Cora. My brother and I have loved you as a daughter, and whatever your true origin may have been, our feelings towards you will remain unchanged; we have learned to love you for yourself, and we are glad to know that you deserve all that we can give you, and I would have you remember that Walter also is a Lyster, and above all pettiness."

"I know, auntie; it isn't that I doubt him or you, it is that I love you and my father and Walter far too well to bring disgrace upon you. Oh, if I could but find out, beyond all doubt, who my parents really were I should feel that I knew what I ought to do."

"My dear child," said Lady Bellinda, deeply touched by the girl's distress, "profit by the advice and experience of an old woman; do the duties and accept the blessings that lie straight before you, and leave the future to Him who feeds the sparrows and who watches over the humblest as well as the noblest of His creatures."

"I will try, auntie," with a sad smile; "and at any rate I will do whatever you wish me to do."

"Then try to be bright and cheerful. Here is Walter's letter; you may read it, but bring it back to me, and remember, Cora, not a word of its contents even to his mother. I shall see her myself, and whether I tell her about it or not will depend upon circumstances. Now you can run away, I expect Mr. Cadbury, and I want the letter back soon that I may show it to him before he goes away again."

So Cora carried off the precious epistle to her own boudoir, and Lady Bellinda sat with Dick Marsden's letter crushed in her hand; she had kept the knowledge of its contents from the girl, feeling that it would only occasion her needless anxiety.

Mr. Cadbury came, and was not a little surprised when he heard Lady Bellinda's story, for the last letter he had received from Walter had been written just as he was about to leave Mexico, and only announced the success of his inquiries about Juanita's marriage and enclosed the proofs which at the last moment Padre Serapio had entrusted to him. These proofs were unfortunately too late to be of any service, for nothing had been seen or heard of Juanita since that memorable February afternoon, and Cadbury had looked them away, wondering if he should ever again see the beautiful woman whom they concerned.

What struck the doctor as especially singular was the fact that Walter had never mentioned to him any cause for search or inquiry about his own father, and even the striking resemblance between our hero and Lord William Lyster which had once struck him so forcibly had passed out of his mind, so that the news was even a greater surprise to him than it had been to her ladyship. He listened to all she had to tell him, however. He read Walter's letter carefully, and also that written by Dick Marsden, and observing Lady Bellinda's evident anxiety, he volunteered to go to London himself and send off an urgent message by the most expeditious means to the Peruvian capital.

"I venture to make one suggestion," he said, as he was about to go. "Keep this matter secret until Walter returns, and above all keep it secret from Mr. Latimer."

"I intend to do so," was the grim reply, while the proud eyes flashed with anticipated triumph. "Also," she added, in a significant tone, "I don't intend to oppose the doctors any longer. They say my brother is stronger and that they have every hope of the operation

being successful if I will allow it to take place. I have hesitated and doubted and feared, but now my brother will have more than ever to live for, and I am sure, if he had any voice in the matter, he would elect to take the risk and brave death rather than live on for years devoid of sense and reason and incapable of enjoyment."

"Yes, I have felt that myself," said Cadbury, with earnestness; "but hesitated to persuade you while there was so much at stake. I wonder if it would be possible to get the operation safely over without letting that man know it was going to be attempted. You give me credit for being prejudiced against Mr. Latimer I know, but I assure you there are no bounds to my distrust of him."

"Nor to mine, and I hate him as much as I distrust him. He shall know nothing about it until the trial has been made. And now, let me urge you to lose no time in sending for Walter."

"I will not," and thus they parted.

That same afternoon Sir Samuel Fenton came down from London to pay his weekly visit to his noble patient. He found him comparatively well in point of health, but as incapable of thought or mental activity as ever.

"This must end," muttered the surgeon to himself, "I never saw a better prospect for a successful operation."

In this frame of mind he sought Lady Bellinda and began to express his opinion to her when, to his surprise, instead of making objections as usual, she said:

"I quite agree with you, Sir Samuel. The operation shall be performed, but I will have no local practitioners to assist, and I wish the matter to be conducted with the utmost secrecy. Bring down the most skillful surgeons from London, spare nothing to ensure success, and be sure of our substantial gratitude in return, but remember, that I wish no one besides the nurses and myself to know when the operation is to take place, or the result of it, for a time, if it is satisfactory."

"Your ladyship shall be obeyed," with a puzzled expression of countenance. "In the ordinary course of things I should come down from town to see my patient this day week. Shall we fix that day for the operation?"

"Yes," with a gasp; "if you think that will be a suitable time."

"Then I will come and bring a brother surgeon with me, a man celebrated for his success in these operations; we shall probably remain the night—I may possibly stay longer. But I can represent myself to be here purely as your ladyship's guest if you wish it."

"Thank you very much; I will explain one day what may seem strange to you now. This day week then I shall see you again."

So they parted, and thus it was settled that a week later Lord Lamorna was to be restored to consciousness and reason, or to set out on his journey to "that bourne from whence no traveller returns," for the result of this operation must be successful or fatal. It was because there was no intermediate stage possible that Lady Bellinda had hesitated in giving her consent, but now she felt that the decision had passed out of her own hands and she could only hope and pray.

The day following this arrangement with Sir Samuel Fenton Lady Bellinda drove to Stoneycroft to call upon Mrs. Smith. That the widow was surprised at receiving this unusual mark of attention was natural, for her ladyship had never paid a single visit to anyone since that bleak cold afternoon when her brother was brought home bleeding and insensible. The object of the old lady's visit, however, was soon made clear.

"I received a letter from your son yesterday," she began, in her usual straightforward manner, while mentally she was wondering what charm this woman could have had for her brother; "it was relative to some matter he had undertaken for Lord Lamorna, and as he was writing in haste to save the mail, he asked me to let you know that he should be coming home soon."



[INTERCEDES.]

"Coming home!" exclaimed Mrs. Smith, her face flushing with excitement; "he said nothing about it to me in the letter I received only last week. What can have happened to make him talk of coming home; has he found his father's papers?"

"He speaks of some box of papers which had belonged to his father, and which he hoped soon to have in his possession. Would you object to tell me about your husband? And what makes Walter set so high a value upon those papers, Mrs. Smith?"

The widow gasped rather than sighed as she said:

"My only objection is that the subject always recalls so much sorrow and suffering that I seem to live the agony of my youth over and over again, and time has no power to soften the distress the recollection of it always produces."

"It is not from idle curiosity that I ask," said her ladyship, with more tenderness than Mrs. Smith had ever seen her exhibit to anyone before; "but I have weighty reasons for learning all that is possible about your husband. Try to nerve yourself to tell me about your marriage and the birth of your child and of your husband's death."

"I will," with an effort; and then the story that had been told to Walter by his mother to restrain him from going to Lima was repeated to Lady Bellinda.

Women can talk to each other as they cannot talk to men, let them love them ever so dearly, and Lady Bellinda was allowed to look into the heart of this bereaved woman, and to see how fondly and faithfully she had loved the husband who had been so cruelly torn from her. Long before she had finished Lady Bellinda was holding her hand tenderly and weeping silently with her.

"Had your husband no other name besides that of William Smith?" asked her ladyship when her companion paused after telling her story.

"Yes," was the reply; "he used to sign his name as William L. Smith; but really I don't remember what the letter L stood for."

"Did you never hear?"

"Yes; I remember his telling me once, but it is so long ago; we were only together a year, you know, and I have never really thought about it since."

"Don't you think if you tried you could remember?"

"I am afraid not!" doubtfully.

"Have you a portrait of your husband, or a letter, or anything that once belonged to him that you can show me?"

"Yes, I have his portrait, he gave it me a month after we were married, and now I remember there is something written at the back; I will show it to you."

She left the room and a few seconds later returned with a leather case in her hand.

"It is five-and-twenty years since this was given to me," she said, sadly, "and I have hardly dared to look at it since he died. The daguerreotype is fading, but you can see what my dear husband was like when I lost him."

And the widow placed before Lady Bellinda's eyes the portrait, which she saw at once was that of her own brother, and in an unsteady voice she said:

"It is true then; beyond a doubt, this was my brother and your name is not Smith, but Lyster."

Walter's mother looked at her visitor as though she thought she had taken leave of her senses, then, both of them impulsively turned the framed picture out of its case to look at the back of it.

"For my wife Mary, from her loving husband William Lyster Smith, Oct. 5th, 1847."

The widow's astonishment was great when Lady Bellinda now told her of the discovery that Walter had made in searching for Lord William Lyster, but when she heard that he was seeking further confirmation by trying to obtain the papers which Castellaro still retained, anxiety

for the safety of her son overcame every other consideration.

"He will be killed as his father was," she exclaimed, despairingly. "Oh why would he rush into such deadly danger!"

Lady Bellinda tried to combat her fears and gloomy anticipations, but with very slight success. She explained to her also the reasons which made her desire to keep this discovery a profound secret until Walter's return, and Mrs. Smith, as we must still call her, readily promised that not a word about it should be breathed by herself. The prospect of being addressed as Lady William Lyster had no charm or fascination for her.

Lady Bellinda returned to the castle, her heart lighter than it had been for many months past, and yet with a terrible cloud of anxiety hanging over her and shrouding the future like a deep pall.

And Fleming Cadbury, having sent off his urgent message to Lima, was walking at the very same hour of the same afternoon down Fleet Street when, at a particularly crowded part of the pavement he came face to face with a woman, who stared at him, as he did at her, in blank amazement.

"Juanita!" he cried, as soon as he could command the power of speech.

"Hush!" she said, in a terrified tone and with a scared glance around. "Hush, he may hear you."

In a moment he understood that she was afraid of someone, that her mind had received some terrible shock, and he said in a low impressive tone:

"You are safe now, I will protect you. Come this way out of the crowd."

Then he led her down a narrow street which led to the river, though he shuddered to see how she looked behind her at every step, like a hunted creature whose life was in peril and whose reason had well nigh given way under the terrible pressure of an all-absorbing, horrible fear.

(To be Continued.)





[A MOMENT OF PERIL.]

## CLARICE VILLIERS;

## WHAT LOVE FEARED.

## CHAPTER XLII.

## AT THE "DEN."

Com'st thou to weep with me?—for I am left  
Alone on earth, of every tie bereft. HEMANS.

It was with a heavy heart that Lord Redmond had reached the humble home where he ardently hoped to receive that fond greeting from Aricia which would go so far to mitigate his troubles.

For Everard's errand had not proved a satisfactory one by any means. He had found the old marquise in a decidedly unpleasant frame of mind, tetchy, querulous, and full of upbraiding at his son's supposed neglect.

That was, however, by no means the worst, for Lord Malverres having first lectured Redmond severely, respecting the breaking off of the latter's engagement with Miss Villiers, proceeded to inform Everard that he had looked out for him a more eligible partner in the person of a no longer youthful, but richly portioned, lady, who was the daughter of an old acquaintance.

There could hardly have been a more inauspicious juncture for the disclosure of the fact that the young man was already wedded, and that the woman whom he had chosen was of plebeian origin. So much impressed was Lord Redmond with this unfortunate fact that he decided against attempting to moot the subject while the old marquise held his present irascible frame of mind. It would be absurd to risk his father's furious indignation. Far better adopt a temporising policy and reserve the avowal till a more favourable period.

It was, however, somewhat fortunate for the

young man that the business matters of which his father had written would necessitate, after a consultation with the family lawyer, Everard's return to London for a short time. Had it not been for this he would have had extreme difficulty in keeping his word to Aricia, for now the Marquis of Malverres had at last secured his errant son, he was by no means willing to let him stray away again, and then only upon the understanding that Redmond should accomplish the business in hand with all despatch and return forthwith to the north.

It was early on a dull autumn day, when the sere leaves of the trees in the suburban gardens lay thick on the blossomless beds below, and a dull yellow-brown fog wrapped the London streets in its pall-like gloom, that Lord Redmond reached his destination. His mood was not hopeful and the dreary day lent a deeper feeling of depression. But the young man's sombre face brightened as the hansom in which he was sitting bowed rapidly along the long quiet street, in which the dull brick houses were as much alike as so many peas, and pulled up sharply at No. 27.

A little shadow of disappointment came across his countenance as he sprang from the cab. He had expected that Aricia's face, radiant with pleasure, would have looked from the window in delighted welcome. The intelligence which greeted him on his entrance caused the shadow to become intensified tenfold.

"Gone away! What do you mean?" he exclaimed, excitedly, repeating the words of the landlady with incredulous emphasis.

"I mean what I say," responded the woman. "Mrs. Redmond has gone away. Mr. Bourchier, who brought her here, came for her the night before last and took her away with him."

Everard stared stupidly at the woman, as if he could not comprehend her meaning.

"Gone, gone!" he repeated. "And where has Lady—where has my wife—gone to?"

"Mr. Bourchier didn't say, sir," responded the landlady, evidently full of the importance of an event which she hoped might savour of the mysterious. "And Mrs. Redmond was that

hurried and worried, poor dear! by Mr. Bourchier's telling her to 'look sharp' that she hadn't time to say a word to me. To be sure Mr. Bourchier said she'd be back in a day or two and he'd telegraph to you the next morning. But there's ne'er a tele—what is it? Oh, telegram—as come, sir."

A feeling of unutterable fear came upon Lord Redmond. What did it mean? Was it possible that his wife could quit her home, at whose- ever's instigation, and leave no line, no message regarding either her purpose or her destination for her husband?

Turning from the landlady Lord Redmond strode hastily through the rooms. He found symptoms of disarrangement in places, but no slightest scrap of his wife's handwriting. He rang sharply for the landlady and interrogated her minutely. She could add nothing to the information which she had already afforded save that it was plain from the lady's face, as she left the house, that she had been weeping bitterly.

Redmond's brain was in a perfect maze of bewilderment, which for a space prevented him alike from clear thinking or decided action. Who was this Mr. Bourchier, this self-styled relative, that he should act the part of an earthly fate to Aricia and her husband, bringing them together or separating them at his will? Why had this mysterious individual apparently prevented Lady Redmond leaving an explanation of her strange departure? In fine, whither had the dark-visaged saturnine stranger spirited away the girl and by what inducements had he secured her departure?

To some at least of these questions Lord Redmond, as he grew calmer, thought he could find answer. There was no question that Aricia's affection for her mother had been the spring which Mr. Bourchier had touched. He had in all probability effected a reconciliation between mother and daughter, and in Aricia's eagerness to embrace her parent the girl had somewhat forgotten her wifely duty.

This solution re-assured Redmond to some slight degree, but he felt that it was perfectly

impossible that he could let any space of time pass without verifying his hopes and seeing his wife.

The Marquis of Malverres' business must wait. Everard would at once repair to Tremawr. He did not need any preparations for the journey, and leaving the house, walked rapidly towards the nearest cabstand. As he did so it flashed across his mind that even if Aricia were herself reconciled to her mother, the latter might yet receive him the reverse of graciously—might indeed refuse to permit Aricia to leave the gloomy mansion.

A friend and witness would be a very desirable companion. But who? Lord Redmond's thoughts lighted upon Captain Bertram Playdell. The soldier was the very man. If he could be found at his club, there was little doubt but that Everard could secure his assistance.

In this matter Lord Redmond was successful. He found Captain Playdell, who entered into his friend's wishes at once. So the two young men soon found themselves being whirled along westward by a fast train.

The afternoon was far advanced when they reached Tremawr, and the shades of evening were falling around Mrs. Dornton's gloomy retreat as the fly which Redmond had chartered at the station drew down the dull avenue of half bare trees.

As the vehicle reached the gate of the courtyard, Lambourne's ugly head was protruded. His usual stullen countenance took on an added malignancy as he recognised Playdell, who was looking out of the window, and as the young men descended, and Redmond came into the dwarf's view, the latter's jagged eyes seemed instinct with veritable fire.

"Allow me to take the initiative," whispered Playdell to his companion, to which Redmond gave a nod of assent.

It was with much difficulty, however, that the soldier could induce the dwarf to carry in his card and message, but the judicious introduction of a piece of gold into Lambourne's hairy paw at last turned the scale. He presently returned, scowling maliciously. Mrs. Dornton sent back her compliments, at delivering which courteous message Lambourne grinned like a fiend, but she could not see anyone. But Playdell was not the man to be easily repulsed.

"Mrs. Dornton and I are acquaintances," he said, as he judiciously placed another half sovereign in Lambourne's hand. "She has seen me before, and will again, I am persuaded."

"That donnot follow," growled the dwarf. "Madame never cared greatly to see strangers f' th' ould time, but sin' Miss 'Ricia be gone she hates them more nor ever."

At the mention of his wife's name Lord Redmond started forward, as if about to speak, but Playdell checked him by a gesture.

"It is about your young mistress we have come," said the soldier.

The words appeared to cause an instant change in the dwarf's manner. His rugged features relaxed somewhat, and he disappeared with something like alacrity. When he came back he announced that Mrs. Dornton would see Captain Playdell. Lord Redmond's name had not been mentioned.

Lambourne clumsily ushered the two into one of the large rooms on the ground floor of the mansion. Here, although the ancient and massive furniture was dull and dilapidated, some attempt at order had evidently been made. A fragrant fire of beechen billets burned between the andirons, for the evening was chill, and two waxlights in silver candlesticks dimly illuminated the apartment.

Mrs. Dornton reclined upon a low couch near the ample hearth, the firelight falling full upon her face, marked by pain and suffering. She raised herself slightly, and held out her hand as Lambourne closed the door and Playdell crossed the room.

"Captain Playdell will, I know, bear with the infirmities of an old woman: I am very weak and worn now."

Her voice was gentler than had been its wont; her manner strangely subdued. The captain hastened to express his regret at her indisposition, when just at the moment Lord Redmond advancing came into the circle of the candles' radiance.

Mrs. Dornton's eyes fell upon him, and she gave a strong shiver. Then her weakness and sympathy seemed to vanish as by the operation of a charm. She sprang to her feet, and pointing at Redmond with denouncing finger, cried, hoarsely:

"Reptile and recreant, do you dare to show your evil face within the walls of the home which you have blasted. Should not the ancient roof-tree fall and crush you? Should I not slay you as you stand there?"

Her right hand sought the pocket of her dress and reappeared instantly with something shining grasped in the long thin fingers. It was a tiny revolver, which the next moment the recluse held with an unflinching hand full levelled at Lord Redmond's heart. Playdell would have sprung forward to disarm her, but for his friend's stern command.

"Be still, my friend," cried Everard, "this is my affair, and I do not fear that Mrs. Dornton will draw trigger on me."

"Traitor and abductor, what should restrain me?"

"The fact that I am your daughter's husband."

"It is false! This is another sordid trick to play upon me that I may be pacified."

"It is true as Heaven. Aricia is Lady Redmond in the sight of Heaven and man. It is because she is so that I am here this night to seek her."

"Here! What mean you?"

"Did not Mr. Bourchier bring my wife hither the night before last?"

Mrs. Dornton looked at the querist with a puzzled but suspicious air. But she replaced the pistol, and with a sudden access of weakness, sank again upon the couch. Placing chairs for himself and friend, Playdell remarked:

"I feared there was more in this business than you imagined. It is evident also that Mrs. Dornton does not know your Mr. Bourchier under that cognomen. Perhaps if you tell your story things may be explainable."

Thus adjured Lord Redmond related the course of events from his reception of Bourchier's forged letter until his return that morning to find Aricia absent. At the first mention of Mr. Bourchier, Mrs. Dornton's wrinkled brow knit itself with an expression of mystification.

A look of greater interest came to her face as Everard named the church where the wedding was celebrated, and spoke of Aricia's constant yearning to seek her mother and pray for her forgiveness. At the close of the recital she became painfully excited, and as Redmond ended she cried, with plaintive bitterness:

"I know nothing of this man. He is no relative of mine. Aricia, my child, my child, into whose hands hast thou fallen?"

Playdell had listened to the story with grave attention. He now queried suddenly and sharply of Mrs. Dornton:

"You know of no one who answers to the description of this Mr. Bourchier?"

She gave a negative reply.

"Go over the description again, Redmond, if you please," said Playdell.

His companion did so. Aricia had given her husband very minute details of the man's appearance, noting, amongst other trivial matters, that his ear-lobes had been pierced for rings, and that he had lost the two middle front-teeth in the lower jaw. As Redmond concluded, the soldier smote the table with his fist, and cried, in an exulting voice:

"I have him!"

Both his companions rose excitedly.

"By Jove, yes! It is Giacomo!"

"Giacomo?" said Mrs. Dornton, questioningly.

"You neither know him nor his master," responded Bertram. "But I know both, and

that description is the scoundrelly valet to the life."

A light broke on Redmond.

"Valet?" he said, eagerly.

"Ay, Lord Boscawen's Italian. The fellow who does all his dirty work. I would swear to him. But I don't see what his game has been in your affairs."

Redmond rapidly narrated the scene at the theatre.

"Humph!" said Playdell, meditatively. "That may explain why Boscawen has played the daring game of attempting to punish you by abducting Lady Redmond. But why did this Italian set the good genius first and bring you together?"

"I can see it, Mr. Playdell," said Mrs. Dornton, an eager look coming into her steel-grey eyes. "It was that this man who calls himself Boscawen should remove a rival for Miss Williams's hand. Ah! I have the power to crush that serpent. You shall remain beneath my feet to-night. I will seek the aid of sleep by means I know of. On the morrow I shall have strength, and will, with you, hunt this reptile and abductor to his den."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A CARRIED OFF.

Words cannot paint the British smile  
That suited the traitor's cheek the while!  
Fiercely questioned of the enemy;  
He made a smile and withal gave. Scott.

Mrs. Boscawen and her charge, seated comfortably in a first-class carriage, were hurried along through the night to their destination. Absorbed in her passionate grief Aricia took no notice of her surroundings. She cared not to look out at the black night through which they rushed, nor to observe the peopled platforms of the stations at which the train stopped.

No passenger entered the compartment which she and Mr. Bourchier occupied, and that gentleman kept the windows up, and generally addressed some remarks to Aricia in a remarkably loud voice as the porters called out the names of the various stations in unintelligible words.

It would have been all the same, so far as Aricia was concerned, had the men articulated every word with the distinctness of a Demosthenes, for Aricia knew nothing of the names of the stations between Tremawr and London. When they at last reached the end of their journey Bourchier hurried Lady Redmond across the platform and past the ticket-taker to a carriage which was in waiting.

The horses sped rapidly along the dark country road. Suddenly the vehicle pulled up, and Mr. Bourchier sprang out and let down the step for his companion. A stout-built, common-looking man was standing at a few paces distance holding a lantern, and at the end of a short gravelled footpath a door stood open, from which light issued.

Aricia glanced at the lantern-bearer. It was not Lambourne. Then it struck the girl that the open door was not in the right position for any entrance of the Folly. She looked up quickly. The night was dark but starlight, and Aricia detected instantly that the sombre outline of the lofty gables and high chimneys of her mother's house did not project themselves on the star-spangled sky. As Mr. Bourchier took her hand to assist her out she shrank back.

"This is not—where am I?" she exclaimed, with some trepidation.

"Oh, no, it is not the Folly," returned Mr. Bourchier, in a reassuring voice. "Of course, I had my cousin moved at once to quarters where she could be properly cared for. The Folly is a couple of miles off."

Satisfied by his tone Aricia allowed him to lead her to the house. Mr. Bourchier escorted her into an old-fashioned room, plainly but substantially furnished.

"I will go first to prepare your mother for the interview," he said. "And it is well that



you, too, should be strengthened for the trial. You must partake of some refreshment."

Despite Aricia's protestations that she required none, her companion struck a small hand-bell, and a woman entered, bearing a tray, on which were some light viands, a decanter of wine and glasses. After urging Aricia to partake of food the man left the room.

It was some time before he returned. The girl had not touched either the repast or the wine, but sat watching for his reappearance with a set, pale face, and wistful eyes. Mr. Bouchier shook his head sadly.

"My poor cousin is greatly changed, and fast sinking. What, you have not followed my advice? You shall not expose yourself to the terrible shock of seeing her before you have at least fortified and exhausted nature by a glass of wine."

He poured out a couple as he spoke, and handed one to Aricia. "She waxes it away impatiently, but seeing that he would not permit the interview until she obeyed, she drank the liquid hastily."

"Jane will conduct you to your mother's room," said Mr. Bouchier, touching the bell. "It would be better that I should not be present at your sad reconciliation."

The woman appeared, and Aricia left the room with her. Hardly had they done so when Mr. Bouchier tossed his glass of wine off, refilled, and despatched the contents of a second, took three or four steps of a kind of extemporised pas seul—in fact conducted himself generally in a peculiar, not to say slightly insane manner.

"Little idiot!" he muttered, with a sardonic grin. "There's no pleasure in caging such a one as she. She is altogether too simple."

While Mr. Bouchier was thus recreating himself, Aricia followed her conductress up the somewhat steep stairs. She felt a strange sensation of weakness and weariness come over her as she did so. With each step her thoughts appeared to grow more and more confused; her feet seemed heavy as lead; the candle which Jane carried multiplied itself into fifty little flames, which danced wildly about the staircase ceiling.

Aricia did not even ask herself what these strange symptoms might mean. When she arrived at the landing she clutched the doorpost of the room which Jane pointed out as Mrs. Dornton's chamber with a convulsive grip to save herself from falling. Then by a strong exertion of will she stood firmly erect and stepped into the apartment. It was the last effort of Aricia's failing consciousness, and the next instant she sank prostrate upon the floor.

In one of the chambers of Lord Boscawen in Maddox Street, a small, dark-faced man was busily engaged in packing a couple of portmanteaus, so busily that he did not notice that the handle of the door was turned several times ineffectually, but noiselessly. The door was locked. The dark man seemed to be in remarkable spirits. He whistled gaily or sang snatches of Italian peasant songs. At last he had finished his packing.

"Now for a hansom," he said, going to the door, unlocking and opening it.

There had been patient sentinels outside. In a moment the dark-faced man was seized by the throat by muscular hands and dragged into the room again. Several persons followed. The door was locked again, and the captive, who was secured hand and foot by handkerchiefs, found himself before an extemporised tribunal of two men and a veiled woman.

"He can never reward you. To-morrow he will be a penniless outcast and fugitive. But I—I will give you a cheque for five hundred pounds when she is safe."

It was the woman who spoke.

"Enough! Be it, as you wish," said the dark-faced man.

It was Giacomo, the valet—Mr. Bouchier.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

## UNMASKED.

Could I bear this? The ranking thought, Deep, dark, within my bosom wrought;  
Some serpent, kindling hate and guile,  
Lurk'd in my infant's rosy smile. HEMANS.

WHEN Aricia recovered her senses she found herself lying in a bed strange to her; in a rather small but well appointed chamber. The holland blinds at the windows were down, although the curtains were drawn back, thus enabling Lady Redmond to realise that it was daylight. Aricia threw a rapid and inquiring glance over her surroundings. Where was she, and how came she there? Her head felt heavy, her eyes dull, and for a few moments the girl was scarcely able to realise that she was not dreaming.

Then memory of the events of the preceding evening came back to her, although faintly and indistinct. But from the haze one fact soon emerged clearly. She had not looked on her dying mother's face, nor heard her speak, nor pressed a kiss of reconciliation on her furrowed brow. And now a night had passed, and her mother might be numbered with the dead.

At the thought Aricia sprang up. Her head was dizzy, her limbs trembled, yet she sought to dress herself hastily. Her rapid toilette accomplished, she turned to the bell-pull and summoned the attendant. Jane presently appeared. She was a hard-featured woman of middle age.

"Good-morning, miss," she said; "hope you have slept well."

In her anxiety Aricia did not notice the appellation which the woman had used.

"Oh, yes, thanks," Lady Redmond replied, hurriedly. "But how is my mother? Can I see her now?"

"No, miss. She is sleeping at present, and the doctor says that she must not be disturbed. I will call you directly she wakes. But you must wait your breakfast. It is ready in the next room."

The woman crossed the floor, and opening a pair of folding doors, showed a larger apartment contiguous to the bed-chamber, on a table in which stood the accessories of the morning meal. Aricia's face wore a shadow of disappointment and apprehension.

"You are sure my mother is better, Jane?"

"Positive, miss. The doctor thinks now that she may recover."

Somewhat reassured Lady Redmond seated herself at the breakfast table, inquiring as he did so for Mr. Bouchier. He had been called away by business, the woman said, but would speedily return. Lady Redmond little imagined that her prolonged slumber had extended over two nights and a day. When she had finished her breakfast, and Jane had removed the tray, she sat for a while in thought.

"I wonder whether Mr. Bouchier apprised my husband of my journey?" was her mental query. "At any rate, when I have seen my mother I will send another telegram," she concluded.

Then refusing Jane's offer of assistance as coiffeuse or lady's-maid, the girl lapsed into a reverie, in which thoughts of her absent husband and her sick mother were strangely mingled.

The attendant quickly left the room.

The sound of wheels on the gravel outside aroused Lady Redmond from her abstraction. It was doubtless Mr. Bouchier returning. She stepped to the window, which was thickly draped by lace curtains, and drew aside their soft folds. Aricia found that the window did not command the drive and that she could not see the new-comer; but she noted, with a sudden sense of apprehension, that the window was strongly barred outside with recently erected ironwork, which the curtains had in part concealed. She passed into the bed-chamber and drew up the blind. That window also was strongly barred.

"It is merely a protection against burglars," she strove to tell herself, but the instinctive fear

which the discovery induced led the girl to the door of the larger room.

She turned the handle. The door was locked.

So was that of the smaller chamber. Her suspicions now thoroughly excited, Aricia rang the bell violently. It was some little time before any response came. Then she heard a light footfall in the passage, the key turned noiselessly in the lock, the door opened and a gentleman entered.

Aricia fell back in a cold terror. She recognised her visitor. He was differently attired, and seen now by the morning sunlight instead of under the garish glare of the theatre chandeliers, but she could not have mistaken him even if the dark bruise yet on his face, where her husband's hand had fallen, had not added a certain element for recognition. It was Lord Boscawen.

Aricia did not scream nor faint, but her face blanched utterly as she stood gazing at him with dilated eyes. He stood silent and motionless for a space, a half-sardonic smile upon his face, as if he enjoyed and desired to prolong her terrified agony. The wild beast and the serpent similarly exult in the misery of their helpless prey.

But the girl's natural courage was high, and, despite her realisation of the fact that in some way she was the victim of a nefarious plot, Aricia bore herself dauntlessly and returned the basilisk and insolent stare of Boscawen by a firm, proud regard. For a few moments each preserved silence. The young man was the first to break it.

"Good-morning, Miss Dornton," he said. "I hope you have recovered from the fatigue of your journey."

He advanced towards her with his hand outstretched as he spoke. Aricia ignored the gesture.

"I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance," she responded, in clear, incisive tones.

"That is a misfortune which can be easily rectified, Miss Dornton," said Boscawen.

"I have no wish that it should be," Aricia replied, haughtily. "Where is Mr. Bouchier?"

"That estimable individual has left the house. But I can more than fill his place."

"You!"

Her look of scorn angered him.

"Caged birds must be tamed," he said, with a sneer, as he advanced a step nearer, and attempted to take the girl's hand.

"Back, sir! Do you know where you are?"

"An altogether absurd question, my dear young lady. I am in my own house."

"Your house! Is my mother here?"

"I have not the felicity to number that lady among my guests. It is sufficient for me that her daughter graces my poor dwelling."

"Is she—or is she not—ill, on the point of death?"

"I haven't the slightest idea. I suppose—what did you call him, Miss Dornton?—oh, yes Mr. Bouchier,—well, I suppose Mr. Bouchier told you any convenient fib which would—"

"Go on, sir," said Aricia, with constrained calmness.

"Which would bring you to the arms of the man who loves you, videlicet, myself."

"Do you dare use this insolent language to me?" cried the girl, passionately, her face becoming crimson with indignation. "Leave the room! Or rather, I will at once quit this house."

And Lady Redmond took a few hasty steps to the inner room, caught up her hat and travelling cloak, returning with them in her hand. Boscawen surveyed her with an amused smile.

"May I ask whither you will go, Miss Dornton?"

"I go to my home and to my husband, and you may thank—"

"Your husband—who may he be?"

Boscawen's palpable sneer had nearly drove Aricia to commit the indiscretion of revealing her husband's name and title. But she remembered in good time that it was for

Everard to publish their nuptials to the world. "His name is no concern of yours. It is sufficient that you yet bear the evidence of how well he can defend me," she replied, with sarcastic emphasis.

At the taunt, the jeering smile which had mantled Boscawen's features vanished suddenly, to be replaced by a ferocious look.

"Curse him!" he cried. "You mean the fellow called Redmond. Yes, and I have a fine revenge. I take from him his pretty plaything for my own pleasure. I thank him! He has civilised the pretty little wild bird ready for me!"

Lady Redmond made an effort to pass Boscawen, but he retained his position immediately before the closed door.

"You call him your husband! Bah! idiot as he is, he isn't the man to commit such an indiscretion as marriage with even pretty Miss Dorn-ton. No, no, my little pet. You've been his chère amie for a few pleasant weeks, and now you shall be mine, and you'll find me a pleasanter fellow—and a devilish deal more liberal—than Redmond. Why, I've even brought some jewellery to-day as a peace offering."

In silence, but with cheeks and brow flaming red, Lady Redmond made a movement to evade Boscawen and gain the door. He extended his arms to intercept her, but Aricia repulsed him with such force that he staggered. It seemed that it but required the contact of the girl's hand to stir up all Lord Boscawen's evil passions—both of hate and so-called love—on the instant.

He recovered himself and the next moment Lady Redmond felt herself clasped violently in his arms. She struggled at first silently and with all her force, but the girl's strength was inferior to that of her brutal assailant, and grief and the drugged slumber had enfeebled her. Then when Aricia found that her frantic efforts were futile, and that Boscawen's moustache was brushing her cheeks, his lips seeking hers, her courage failed and she poured forth scream upon scream.

"Sing away, my pretty little bird," said Boscawen, mockingly. "There are none either to hear or to rescue. Tire yourself well and then you'll become tame and compliant."

Absorbed in his endeavours to secure his capture, Lord Boscawen did not notice the sound of voices apparently raised in altercation coming from the lower part of the house.

Even in Aricia's terror and excitement one of the voices struck familiarly upon her ear. It was that of the man who had brought her thither. In her despair the girl was ready to cling to a straw.

"Mr. Bourchier!" she shrieked. "Help me."

Then Boscawen also heard the voice.

"Giacomo!" he said. "What the deuce brings him back?"

Footsteps resounded upon the stairs—they reached the landing.

"Curse it, Giacomo!" cried Lord Boscawen, angrily, through the closed door, "what do you want here? Go down! I will see you presently."

But despite this command the door was burst open, a man sprang in, and hurled Lord Boscawen on one side roughly. The next moment Aricia was clasped in the intruder's arms. It was Redmond. Boscawen stood, glaring vengefully, his fingers working with a convulsive movement like a tiger in act to spring. But his onset was restrained by the entrance of other actors on the scene. Through the open door came the stately form of the Marquis of Calderfield, behind the figure of a tall woman black-garbed and heavily veiled, and last of all, Captain Bertram Pleydell. Boscawen shrank back and cowered as his father's stern eyes fell upon him.

"It is then true!" cried the old man, in tones of poignant sorrow. "This shame has come upon our ancient line."

Then turning full upon Lord Boscawen, the marquis said:

"Will you explain the presence of that lady"—indicating Aricia—"here, Montagu?"

Can you rebut the tale that yonder man has told?"

He pointed out at the semi-obscure of the landing. Boscawen, glaring in that direction, could make out the awkward figure of Giacomo sneaking half behind the door. Bitterly anathematizing inwardly the adverse turn of circumstances, Lord Boscawen resolved to at least put on a bold front.

"I fear I must plead guilty to much indiscretion," he said, with an assumed air of frankness and penitence. "I suppose young men will be young men to the end of the chapter. This girl—young lady—was under Lord Redmond's protection, I believe. She preferred mine. I was quite as much tempted as tempter. Voilà tout!"

"Scoundrel!" exclaimed Redmond, turning fiercely upon the traducer of his wife, as if to strike him to the earth.

But the old nobleman interposed, with a majestic sadness and dignity that restrained Redmond's passion.

"Degenerate scion of a noble stock," he said, sternly, to Boscawen, "a stock of which it has been pronounced of old that all the women were chaste and all the men were chivalrous—what shall I say to you? It had been vile enough for one of your blood if you had sought to still further injure a poor deceived girl—a widow's one lamb—whom another man had wronged. That had been an infamous deed, with an added infamy that you—coward-like—should strive to cast the blame on the feebler one. But this false excuse even affords you no shelter. We—all of us—know from the confession of that rascal, whom no honest man would keep, the depth of your baseness."

Lord Boscawen's pale, shame-stricken face was here elevated momentarily from its drooping pose, and one terrible glance shot from the young man's haggard eyes at the cunning yet terrified visage of the listener on the landing.

"I know that you lured Miss Dorn-ton from her mother's home by your machinations," continued the marquis. "We know that you were well aware that Lord Redmond had made her his wife. Whether your sole object was to remove a rival for Miss Villiers's hand from your path, as your valet asserts, or whether you had any baser object, I cannot tell. Be that as it may, it is certain that after your studied insult to Lady Redmond at the theatre, and the deserved chastisement which you received at her husband's hand, you resolved upon the abduction of the lady, accomplished it by the aid of your villainous Italian; and have been only baffled in your designs by that interposition of Providence which led to their discovery and our appearance here."

"And now what shall I say to you, Montagu? You are my son, bear my name, and will be my heir. But I command you never to see my face again. Oh, Heaven of mercy! how bitter has been my burden of life," the old man cried, in an anguished voice. "The wife whom I adored taking up that fatal misconception and fleeing from her home, to leave my days blank, my heart dry as summer dust. Her lifelong silence and my ever-fruitless searching. Then at last, when I learned that she was no more, but that her child remained to me; when I knew that she and I should meet no more on earth, I still felt a saddened comfort in the hope of this son who should be the stay of my declining days, whose face should bear the traits of his mother's beauty, whose mind should be of the Pleydell's chivalric strain."

"Alas! what did I find? A son who, I could see from our first meeting, had naught of love and little of respect for me—one who when together we made the sad pilgrimage to the quiet churchyard where all that was mortal of his mother lay, scarcely deigned to cast one glance at the grassy mound, which covered Gwendoline Pleydell, that green hillock which my bitter tears bedewed, and my passionate sighs dried again. Away with such a son! Oh! Gwendoline, my lost—my eternal love, thou has left me a bitter legacy."

And the old man flung his hands upwards

with an adjuring cry. Lord Boscawen stood silent, downcast, awed at the expression of his father's disappointment. Pleydell and Redmond gazed at the old patrician with looks of sympathy.

"Maurice!"

The words thrilled on the air in a female's tone, inconceivably soft and sweet. The marquis gave a startled glance around, half eager, half terrified.

"Who calls?"

"Maurice!" came again.

"Gwendoline, doth thy spirit call me? Are we reconciled?"

His eyes looked through the barred window and sought the blue heaven beyond with an awe-struck, abstracted gaze.

"I am on earth, Maurice, thine erring, repentant wife."

The woman who had stood there silent during the marquis's reproof to Boscawen, after one short caress of Aricia, stepped forward. Her heavy black cloak dropped to the floor, she threw aside the sad-coloured bonnet and its thick veil, and stood a tall, stately figure, robed in a rich dark costume, with filmy lace and jewelled gold at wrist and neck.

A noble face, too, somewhat stern of cast, but bright and tender now, the cold steel-grey eyes made soft by the afflux of a long-forgotten love. Mrs. Dorn-ton—Gwendoline Pleydell, Marchioness of Calderfield. The old noble fell back for a moment in utter overwhelming amazement, then with a cry of—

"Gwendoline, my love, my love; from the grave!"

He sprang forward and clasped her in his arms.

"Can you forgive a woman who has blighted two lives by her want of faith and her jealousy, and who only opens her eyes to the truth as they are soon to close in the tomb, Maurice?"

"Ah, can you ask me that, Gwendoline, ever my love? If our earthly re-union be but short, is not Heaven eternal?" And the old man kissed her tenderly on brow and lips, then suddenly recollecting the surroundings, he turned to Boscawen inquiringly.

"But why did Montagu—our son—deceive me about your death, Gwendoline?"

"Our son!" repeated the marchioness, with bitter and scornful emphasis. "Can you deem it possible? Surely even in their very errors the men and women of your house and of mine have been grand and noble. He is no son of ours. He is a specious impostor whom for some ill purposes of their own your solicitors have palmed off on you."

The marquis gave a glance of indignant abhorrence at his supposed son. Basil Olyfaunt, as we must now call him, lifted his pale haggard countenance with something of defiance.

"It will avail me nothing to deny the statement of the marchioness. It is true I am an impostor. But there are others more to be blamed than I. The plot was put in my head by your lordship's lawyers—at least, by one member of the firm. I have already subsidised him to the extent of my means. I gave my bond for the payment of a gigantic sum when I should attain the marquessate. Mr. Barnes's has been the scheming brain; I have been but the tool."

The marquis turned from the young man with an expression of loathing.

"Go!" he said. "Relieve us of your presence!"

Boscawen slunk out, brushing past Giacomo on the staircase. As he did so he whispered in the Italian's ear:

"Cowardly villain and traitor, you shall pay for this!"

Meanwhile, in the room, the marchioness had taken Aricia by the hand and led the girl to Lord Calderfield.

"I know, Maurice," she said, "that at the time of my flight the report was spread that our child was a boy. It was not true. There is no son of ours to inherit the coronet and title of Calderfield. Let us have no regrets for that. They cannot descend to a nobler representative



than Bertram Pleydell. But, Maurice, if we have no son, I can yet give to you a daughter beautiful and good—Lady Aricia Redmond."

When, two days later, Lord Redmond presented his charming consort to the Marquis of Malverres, the old nobleman received with open arms the daughter of Maurice and Gwendoline Pleydell of Calderfield. Mr. Villiers saw fit to make a rapid change in his opinion regarding his ex-secretary and Captain Pleydell. No epithets could be severe enough to stigmatise the fugitive Basil Olyfaunt withal, nor any praise extreme enough for the soldier's cleverness and merits. And when the passage of time had brought the M.P.'s daughter to her old self, and ancient hopes and regrets were alike forgotten, it is easy to surmise that Captain Bertram Pleydell, future Marquis of Calderfield, did not fail to lead to the altar as his bride Clarice Villiers.

[THE END.]

## THE FORCED MARRIAGE; —OR— JEW AND GENTILE.

### CHAPTER I.

"FATHER, for pity's sake do not be so hard upon me. Think of my difficulties—think of my honour!"

"Honour! What do I care for the honour of a gambler, a spendthrift, an ingrate? No, Edward Aveling. I will save myself the misery, the shame, of thinking of that foul thing which you and such as you, call honour. What is it, indeed, but the selfish desire to pay vicious debts contracted at the gaming table, that with a bold face you may present yourself again and contract them anew? No, no. I tell you I have had enough of such work. Time and again I have paid your debts and started you afresh in the world, and what has been the result? Time and again you have run the same wild course. Now I have done with you. Go the way you have chosen, for I am powerless to prevent you. It is only when the need of money presses that you come whining and fawning upon me to get it; but I tell you again, you have had the last shilling you will ever get."

And the speaker, an old man fettered by illness to his invalid chair, brought the stout cane which he held in his hand down upon the floor with so decided a stroke that the crystal pendants upon the chandelier and candelabra gave forth a sudden discordant chime.

The two men who faced each other, the one so angry and the other so anxious, were father and son. The father, choleric both by nature, illness and circumstances, glared upon his companion with passionate resentment; and the latter, flushed, excited and guilty, stood with downcast eyes, but tightly compressed lips, as though he found it hard to repress a hot rejoinder.

The room wherein this interview took place was a handsome chamber, fitted up with every elegance and comfort which ample wealth could command or invalid wants require, while half-open doors on either hand revealed vistas of equal luxury in rooms beyond.

The young man addressed as Edward Aveling stood before his father leaning one hand upon the back of a chair, and for some seconds after the latter's angry speech a dead silence ensued.

The invalid, exhausted by his passionate declaration—an excitement which his weak state scarcely allowed—fell backward in his chair, and though now a deathlike pallor settled upon his face, it was plain that not a jot of his resentment had abated, for his quick breath and rest-

less glance told that his anger had not been appeased by its ebullition.

The time had been when, after a scene such as the one transpiring—by no means an unusual one—the father had been softened by the professed contrition of his only son, and after his rage had subsided he would weakly yield to the young man's persuasions, forgiving him his grievous faults, and, as he had just said, starting him afresh in life. But now, having many and many a time forgiven, and many and many a time suffered disappointment, the old man had lost faith. So the handsome presence, the contrite demeanour, the repentant words, of the son upon whom he had lavished such care and founded such hopes made no impression.

Edward Aveling was the first to break the silence which to both was equally oppressive. Raising his eyes humbly to his father's pale face, he said:

"I do not deny a word you have said, father. I acknowledge it all, and could plead guilty to much more. I know I have wearied and grieved you beyond measure. I will not attempt to excuse my conduct, or to palliate any of my sins. I have broken sacred promises, and violated sacred trusts. I do not blame you for at last becoming tired of me; but, father, my necessities now are so urgent that you must help me or I am ruined for ever. And, father, if you will again trust me, I promise—"

"Stop!" cried the old man, struggling into an upright position, and again grasping the cane which, because of his helpless condition, was almost constantly in his hand. "Stop, Edward Aveling! I will not trust your promises. Despite my counsels, my teachings, my threats, to say nothing of my example, you have gone on from bad to worse, until, according to your own saying, you are undone. You have made your own bed, and you must lie in it until you can struggle out of it yourself. I shall not raise a finger to help you. And let me tell you still another thing, Edward Aveling," the speaker continued, seizing his cane still more firmly, and speaking in a voice almost hoarse with passionate energy—"let me tell you another thing. My ears are weary of hearing of your ill doings, and I now declare to you that if any more of your shameful misdeeds come to my knowledge I will ruthlessly cut you off from all interest in my will."

The young man looked quickly up.

"Yes," repeated his father, noting the sudden glance. "You need not fancy that I am so inextricably bound up in my only child that I shall blindly throw into his hands the hard-earned thousands which I have accumulated that he may squander them on his own sinful pleasures. Your cousin, Mark Upton, is a man who has never gone counter to my wishes. He would make a wise use of the wealth which you would only employ to shorten the road to a shameful grave. So I tell you—and you may heed well what I say—unless from this moment you amend your ways Mark Upton shall be my sole heir, and you shall become his dependant."

"Father!" cried the young man, letting go his hold of his chair, and stepping before it the more fully to confront his parent. "You do not know Mark Upton!"

The old man made as if he would angrily interrupt his son; but the latter went on:

"I say you do not know Mark Upton. Do what you will with your wealth, I have no right to claim it as my own against your will, but think twice before you give it to a man like Mark. I will not seek to throw the blame of my worthless life upon another's shoulders, but I tell you now, sir, what I have never told you before, that it was he who first threw temptation in my way, who laughed at my first downward steps and encouraged me therein, who cheered me on in wrong-doing, making me think it was manly to deceive, to drink, and to do worse. I tell you father, Mark Upton is not the angel of light which you think him. He has traded upon your credulity; his sly, soft ways have utterly blinded you to his real character; he has always hated me because I am your son and he only your poor nephew. So I say again,

father, do what you will with your money, but do not give it to Mark Upton."

Mr. Aveling, during the quick, impassioned speech of his son, made several efforts to interrupt him. His face again changed from its extreme pallor to a deep flush of excitement, and with a voice almost choked with passion, he hoarsely cried:

"Edward Aveling, you tempt me to anathematise the day that you became my son. Weakly yielding to temptation yourself, you now try to throw the blame upon a pure, upright man whose noble example it would have been well if you had imitated. It was for the sake of his companionship and influence that I implored him to become an inmate of my family; you know that he sacrificed other and fairer opportunities when he yielded to my entreaties. A man of his ability would long ago have won for himself a noble place in the world, but for my sake, and for yours also, Edward Aveling, he relinquished those chances and came here. And what is the reward he wins from you? It is base treachery, black ingratitude and vile slander. No, Edward Aveling. If before this moment I had any lingering doubt of your unworthiness to become my heir your words have removed them. My resolution is fixed. The name of Aveling is too honourable to be forgotten, or, worse still, dragged through the slime of a gambler's career. Mark will keep it unsullied by adopting it; he will hold it above all reproach; he, and not you, shall have the means to make it still more honourable than I have been able to do."

For a moment after these last words were spoken Edward Aveling looked at his father irresolutely, a wavering purpose pinioning him to his place. Well for him had it been if the better influence had triumphed and he had spoken the words which sprang to his lips.

Once, indeed, this better purpose seemed victorious, for, taking a step nearer his father's chair, the young man opened his mouth to speak; but at that moment another figure glided into the room through the half-open door of an adjoining chamber and took up its position behind the invalid.

It was a man advancing towards middle age, tall, angular, with soft, gliding movements, pale of face, and wearing a look at once wary, humble and shrewd. Coming behind the old gentleman's chair, he bent over him with solicitude, and passing his hand gently over his forehead, said in a softly modulated voice:

"Uncle, you are not feeling as well as usual to-day. You are becoming excited. Shall I not give you some of the drops the doctor left this morning?"

Mr. Aveling looked up quickly into the face above his chair, for until the new-comer spoke he had not been aware of his approach, so catlike was his tread.

"Ah, Mark," he said eagerly. "You have come at the right moment. Your character has been foully assailed by an unworthy son, and it is well that you are here to vindicate it," and the old man took within his own hand which lay upon his forehead, pressing it with an assurance of his own sympathy.

"Ah, uncle," replied the new-comer, deprecatingly. "my character is of little moment compared with your health and comfort. Let us forget all disagreeable topics for the present. You are already greatly fatigued. Let me call Hopkins to assist you to your sofa, for it is more than necessary that you should have some rest. Edward, I think, will be kind enough to wait until another time to finish what he may have to say," and he glanced at the young man with an appealing look as though enlisting his sympathies for the invalid.

Edward Aveling returned the glance with one of defiant hatred, for the whole scene was one which grated upon him.

"No!" he replied, throwing back his head and looking his cousin full in the face—"no, I will not wait! I agree with my father that it is well you have come, for what I have told him concerning your real character you cannot deny. He calls me an ingrate because I have so faithfully followed your tempting counsels. He

accuses me of being a spendthrift, a gambler and an unworthy son—all of which I do not deny—but it was you, Mark Upton, who made me such. You came here at my father's request to guide me, your younger cousin, by your example and counsel; but did you utter one warning word when I turned my face in the wrong direction, and when day after day I went on in my downward course did you do ought to arrest me? Did you not rather facilitate the descent and encourage it? I do not lay all the blame on you, for my own shoulders must bear their just share, but I do accuse you, before Heaven and man, of betraying the trust my father conferred upon you, and all for your own selfish ends. Deny it if you can."

The invalid would at first have interrupted the young man's impassioned speech, but as the latter went on he again fell back in his chair and helplessly looked from nephew to son, waiting for these two to settle and close the interview.

"Speak!" again cried young Aveling, striding a step nearer his cousin and clenching his hand as if he longed to break the silence by a blow. "Speak! Deny my words if you can, or dare!"

Mark Upton's hand slid from his uncle's clasp and gently sought the invalid's wrist. Then looking up at the angry young man before him he calmly said, while a sickly smile played over his face:

"My dear Edward, I assure you this is no time for us to settle our difficulties; your father's condition forbids it. To prolong this interview would be a crime, for see how exhausted he already is. I have been a dependent too long not to be willing at this moment to endure a little more calumny and hatred in so good a cause as my uncle's well-being."

"Coward!" cried the younger Aveling, through his clenched teeth. "You cannot refute my charges, and you take this method of evading them!"

Mark Upton, behind his uncle's chair, raised his head and looked at his cousin with a bitter, threatening light in his eyes.

"Do you do well to press me so far?" he said, in a quiet yet warning voice.

The tone, the man's manner, and the hidden meaning of his words, aroused the other to a pitch of fury which he was positively unable to withstand, and raising his hand, he dealt his cousin a blow which felled him.

The invalid started forward and raised his arm to avert the assault, but it was too late, for the stroke had descended. He raised his cane and strove to recall his son as the latter, after seeing his enemy fall, turned to leave the room; but the voice, with which he essayed to speak failed him—he could not articulate a word, and a moment later the closing door left uncle and nephew alone together.

Edward Aveling strode from his father's chamber to the suite of apartments which he claimed as his own. Fitted up with all the luxury which a refined taste could suggest and ample wealth command, the pleasant little sitting-room, the cosy smoking room, and the handsome bed-chamber usually won from the young man a glance of satisfaction; but this evening he entered the rooms in such a state of mind that his surroundings had become matters of total indifference to him.

With long, nervous strides he paced back and forth through the apartments, only stopping now and then to thrust out of his way a hassock or a cushion which lay in his path. Once and again his eyes sought the sideboard, whereon stood a handsome wine set, through the crystal flasks of which shone the tempting liquid. Once his hand sought and rested for a moment on one of them, but the next instant the long, striding walk was resumed, and the hot lips were untouched.

"No," he muttered, "I'll take my first lesson to-night, for I have need of all my sense."

But, ah, what resolution can withstand the loved temptation of years, when mind and brain are all on fire with passion. Edward Aveling stood face to face with dishonour. Relying upon his family connections, upon his father's

indulgence, upon his brilliant expectations, he had involved himself in debts and in darker difficulties which he now shuddered to think upon.

Recklessly he had pursued the mad phantom of pleasure. In the wild race to ruin he had been foremost. With bold hand he had plucked the garlands from the neck, the brow, and the arms of the Ciroe, who had been the will-o'-the-wisp which his flying feet pursued, until bereft of her false adornment, he beheld her at last a ghastly skeleton standing upon the brink of a bottomless gulf into which she now, with authoritative gesture, beckoned him to leap.

Filled with horror he had stopped short for one brief moment, and opening his eyes, as it were, from a wild dream, he looked around him—looked around him to behold dangers as great as that yawning pit at his feet—to behold that which even the most abandoned shudder to contemplate—a once respected name held up to the scoff even of gamblers and of ruffians.

One way only remained for him to retrieve himself, and that was through that golden channel which can submerge or wash away all trace of fraud, whose rippling jingle can silence the tongue of suspicion, and whose glitter can almost blind the eyes of truth.

Therefore, the suddenly-awakened, startled young man, not yet utterly dead to all the instincts of a nobler manhood, looked desperately around him for some aid beyond himself.

The father whose assistance he had so often invoked, whose hopes he had blasted, and whose confidence he had repeatedly betrayed, was his only saviour, and to him he had turned with appealing promises of amendment.

But who can blame that father if, at last, he too had lost faith in promises so constantly broken, and who can wonder that to reprimand there succeeded threats, and that both reprimands and threats widened the gulf that separated father and son.

Yet the harassed young man clenched his teeth as he thought of that last interview and of the scene which terminated it. Again he ran over in memory the wretched history of his fall from the innocence of early manhood. He thought of the wily elder cousin who had been assigned him as his companion and exemplar.

He thought of his first lapse from rectitude, and how, expecting to meet the reproaches of his monitor, he was half puzzled, half pleased to find his fault excused and even applauded. He thought of deeper draughts of sin, and again that pale, smooth face, smiling at him from the other side of his wineglass or across darker gulfs of infamy, seemed to urge him onwards with a promise of immunity from blame.

But now, when the sharp pangs of remorse stung him, when sin was robbed of its holiday guise and revealed in all its black deformity, when Edward Aveling stood aghast at his own folly, he beheld the infamy of his false cousin in a strong light.

"Yet Mark is not all the blame!" he ejaculated, as he paced unceasingly his luxurious apartments. "All the blame must not be laid upon Mark, for on myself must rest the greater portion. I weakly yielded to temptation. I suffered myself to be wiled into a careless security by his encouragement. I scoffed at my father's warnings, believing Mark's words when he told me that he would intercede for my forgiveness. I believed the hypocrite, never suspecting that at that time he was secretly poisoning my father's mind against me while he encouraged me to rebel against him. And now I am to suffer the consequences both of his fault and my own. A man cannot be blamed for doing what he will with that which he has toiled and struggled to obtain, but I would that some other man than Mark Upton should gain the prize!"

The clock upon the mantel in the little parlour chimed the hour in silvery tones. Edward Aveling snatched a note from his pocket and hastily scanned it, while a quick contraction of

his features, like a sudden spasm of pain, shot across his face.

"Nine o'clock!" he exclaimed, "and before eleven I promised to meet Duer with the money! If I fail, to-morrow morning finds me behind the bars of a prison, for after what has passed this evening between my father and myself he will never overlook this other affair. I am an idiot to stand here so irresolute when everything depends on action! But where shall I turn? What new device can I attempt?"

He stopped short in his walk as if a sudden thought had struck him; then started on again with an impatient toss of the head as if the thoughts were not worth the harbouring—stopped again in deeper reflection, and at last, with the courage of despair, murmured—

"To try and fail is better than to wait here until the sheriff and his posse come, and while Mark, perhaps, below stairs, is holding my father's hand as he signs his name to a new will."

The young man hastily donned his overcoat and hat, yet before he left the room his eye again sought the tempting liquor upon the sideboard, and this time his weak purpose faltered and succumbed. With nervous hand he poured out and drank glass after glass, and then with flushed face and muttered imprecations left the house.

Yet as he traversed the corridors from his own apartments to the door of the house he heard an unusual tumult in the ordinarily quiet mansion. Servants were hurrying to and fro, doors were hastily opened and shut, the housekeeper met him with an alarmed, deprecating look upon her face; but he paid no heed to these occurrences.

A carriage which, in obedience to orders, had long stood before the door, awaited him. He gave a hasty order to the coachman—

"To Levy's, and drive fast!"

The carriage door was quickly closed; the coachman mounted the box and drove away; neither man nor master being aware that the order just issued had been overheard by a tall, pale-faced man, who stood in a shadow of the house, at no great distance away.

(To be Continued.)

## DANGEROUS GROUND.

OR,

## HAPPINESS ALMOST LOST.

### CHAPTER IV.

THE last day of the allotted week was drawing to a close, and the sunshine was resting caressingly upon the heads of two young girls sitting upon a rustic bench just outside the cottage of the late Widow Morris, watching the gorgeous sunset, and building just as gaily-tinted air castles as any sun-tipped cloud upon the horizon. At length Belle Merton broke out with:

"But where's the use of talking so much of it—counting chickens before they are hatched, as the saying goes? Perhaps you will never hear a word from Captain Grantleigh; and now that father has written for me to come home, and I can't go in case you don't, I'm almost discouraged myself, and won't try any more to encourage you in expectations. I think it more than probable you will never realise."

"But I shall not give up hope yet. I am determined that my identity shall be proved, even though I be only recognized as Richard Grantleigh's child upon my death-bed—though it take my whole lifetime to establish my right to my name and property! If Mr. Morris had not taken the first step by sending my father's letters to Captain Grantleigh, knowing the obstacles I should have to encounter, I would gladly have remained plain Minnie Morris to



the end; but now that I have entered upon this hazardous undertaking, I will dedicate my life to the work, and weak girl though I may be, compared to Hortense Grantleigh and her legion of sympathising friends, I will accomplish my purpose. It is characteristic of the Grantleighs, I believe, never to abandon that which is once undertaken, and I am a Grantleigh!" and the firm-set lips and light of determination in the dark eyes showed that hers were no empty words.

Belle gazed upon her in admiration of her will and spirit as she slowly quoted the lines:

The race is not unto the swift,  
Nor the battle to the strong.

"I am glad you possess so undaunted a spirit, Minnie, and I feel sure you will ultimately succeed. But beware of that girl! She always means you harm—and remember she also is a Grantleigh, certainly without their good qualities; but she may possess their determination. I could always read her shallow, selfish nature, even before she had another purpose in her useless life beside being the handsomest, wealthiest and best dressed girl among her friends. And now that she has changed this for a more substantial purpose, be sure she will accomplish it if it is in the range of human mind to do it!"

But just here the girl's conference was interrupted by the sound of a horse's hoofs upon the hard road leading over the common toward the academy, and in a few moments more a horseman came in sight, then abruptly dismounted and advanced toward them, hat in hand. Minnie's eyes, as if drawn to him by some subtle instinct, at once took in the tall commanding figure clad in its dusty travelling suit, the grand, haughty face and proudly-held head surmounted by iron-grey hair, and the dark, piercing eyes which now dwelt on her with an uncertain, questioning look, and a sudden wild idea entered her head.

Might not her lifelong work be unnecessary, after all—might not her uncle be a Grantleigh, possessing the "good qualities" which his daughter lacked, and, in his sense of right and justice, might he not have come from abroad in answer to his dead brother's last request, to claim that brother's only child and establish her right to her name and home?

Only for a moment, however, did this girl, without the least touch of romance in her nature, allow such an idea to dwell in her well-balanced little head. Then she withdrew her eyes from the handsome face of the noble-looking old man, who was now questioning Belle in regard to the academy and its scholars, and resumed the knitting which rested in her lap.

But with an eager, startled look in their brown depths they flew back again when the quest, "Are you acquainted with a girl by the name of Minnie Morris, formerly a pupil of the academy, and does she still live in this vicinity?" fell upon her ears—flew back and rested there, and met the full gaze of those piercing, dark orbs; and before curious, overjoyed Belle could reply to his pointed inquiry, with a little cry Minnie had half risen from the seat and let fall the work from her nerveless hands, while the stranger took a step forward, and with his gaze fixed upon Minnie's white face, eagerly and half sternly exclaimed:

"Who are you, girl, that have the eyes of my dead brother and the face of his sainted wife? I would stake my honour—and pick you from among a thousand—that the Grantleigh blood flows in your veins as well as in my own! Speak and tell me! Are you known as Minnie Morris?"

With a cry of great joy, and overcome by her emotion, Minnie sank back upon the seat, having only strength to let fall the words:

"I am Minnie Morris!"

The stranger sprang forward to her side, and, taking both her hands in his firm grasp, looked tenderly down into the blanched face.

"Richard's child found at last! I'm not a very demonstrative old man, my dear, but the solving of the mystery which has surrounded you so long gives me the greatest joy I have

known in many long years. Come, child, don't faint now, for a true Grantleigh never faints. But I need no other proof than your face and eyes to convince me that you have a right to your name. Come, my niece Hortense, give me the welcome you should give an uncle who has sought for you so long and found you at last."

Only for a moment now did Minnie allow her great joy to thus overwhelm her, and then her new-found uncle did not lack, in many heartfelt words and active demonstrations of joy, gratitude and welcome.

Twilight had drawn its curtain over all, and the bright stars were blinking out one by one in the azure vault which seemed bending low over the peaceful scene, and the first faint rays of the moon were just silencing the tree-tops and reflecting on the fountains in the yard about the grim old academy, as a group of school-girls, playing a late lively game of croquet on the lawn, were stilled into dropping their mallets and abandoning the "game for the state" through curiosity, by a horseman's halting at the gate, dismounting and advancing up the path, doffing his hat with the courtly grace of a cavalier of the old school to the curious group, and then mounting the steps and giving the bell a quick decided pull. Another moment, and the listening boys were rewarded by hearing him inquire for Miss Hortense Grantleigh, and then the door closed upon his retreating form.

"Who can he be, Hortense?" questioned one, more daring and curious than the rest, and who was rewarded by a glance of tracing contempt from the haughty beauty, who swept past them in answer to a servant's summons.

"It's so mean! Hortense always gets so many calls and letters, while we girls have to stand back!" said the more cunning, a little spitefully, while Hortense, with a little flutter of curiosity, sprang up the steps and into the little parlour, where the tall, commanding form of Captain Grantleigh came to greet her.

He took her hands in both of his, and looked into her face, so haughty and proud, and handsome, and with the fair pink and white complexion, blue eyes, and pale golden hair, so unlike the dark, handsome faces of the dead and gone "true Grantleighs," and sighed to think his daughter was the first fair-haired Grantleigh whose picture had adorned his ancestral halls, feeling a little half-defined sense of jealousy and discontent that Richard's child should have so much more of the family resemblance than his own daughter; for he was very proud of his family and all its peculiarities and characteristics.

"Hortense, my daughter," he said, almost sternly, and this was his only greeting to her; "I received your letter telling me of Mrs. Morris and her confession, and the girl who claimed to be your cousin, and bidding me take no notice of anything concerning the whole affair, and I was very much surprised and grieved; indeed I could scarcely believe it to be my Hortense who wished me to condemn the girl as an impostor before I had granted her a hearing. I had come on from Margate, determined that this mystery of your uncle's life shall be cleared up, and I am here now to announce to you that I have already had sufficient proof of her identity; and so the right of Minnie Morris to the name and property of Richard Grantleigh is fully established. Now, notwithstanding your declaration that you will never own this girl, who, I am proud to say, will do credit to the name she bears, I command you to receive her into our family as befits a Grantleigh to receive one of our name. I am to remain with you here until you graduate, which will be next week, I believe you wrote me, and in the meantime I will see that your cousin is fitted and made ready to return to Margate with us as the acknowledged daughter and heiress of your Uncle Richard."

Whenever Captain Grantleigh spoke in that tone of voice his will was as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. So it was

in vain Hortense fretted, rebelled, coaxed and threatened hysterics;—the old soldier calmly walked the floor with his arms folded across his broad breast, now and then offering a consolatory remark whenever a lull occurred in the little tempest his daughter was doing her best at raising, appearing as cool and collected through it all as if holding a consultation with his lawyer, until at last Hortense had exhausted her vocabulary of words expressive of rage, scorn, and contempt, and sank into a chair with a last parting shot at her father concerning his treating a nameless beggar better than he did his own daughter.

Then Captain Grantleigh calmly rang the bell, ordered a servant to conduct his daughter to her own room, bade Hortense a pleasant "Good night, my child," and took his departure, leaving Miss Grantleigh chagrined and outwitted, to vent her spleen and ill-temper upon her unsuspecting schoolmates.

## CHAPTER V.

MINNIE MORRIS, OR, AS WE SHALL hereafter know her, Minnie Grantleigh (for she preferred retaining the name she had borne so long to distinguish her from her haughty cousin) sat in the little parlour of the quiet hotel where her uncle had placed her the next day after his arrival.

She was dressed in her close-fitting black garments, for she still persisted in wearing mourning for the only mother she had ever known, and with her luxuriant dark brown hair drawn away from the pale, pure face and falling in natural ringlets over the prettily-sloping shoulders, the light of happiness and health shining from her dark eyes and radiant face, and surrounded by the appurtenances of wealth which she was so well fitted to enjoy.

She looked every inch a lady, and even Hortense Grantleigh, sweeping through the little hall and into the pretty parlour, saw no reason to complain of her new-found cousin's appearance. The haughty beauty, clad in trailing silver-grey, with an airy creation of feathers and lace upon her golden hair which represented the latest spring style of hats, paused only a moment at the door and then walked straight to Minnie's side, and assuming a very penitent and humble air, said in her smooth, false voice.

"Dear Minnie, I hope you will forgive me for being so silly and selfish as to oppose your coming into our family; but I have been first in papa's heart so long that I thought I could never bear to share it with another; and then I am such a weak, foolish girl that I feared you, who are so much better and wiser than I, might steal it all from me. So you will forgive me now, and let me love you as my sister, won't you?"

And the fair, false, pleading face was raised to Minnie's with such a beseeching, penitent air that guileless Minnie was readily deceived, and hastened to assure her cousin that she was forgiven any and everything, and to accept the proffered love and friendship, never suspecting the determination still in Hortense Grantleigh's mind to crush this innocent girl as remorselessly as she would a troublesome fly, to embitter her whole life, and to weave a web to again cast her out upon the world, nameless, friendless, and alone.

Thus it followed that innocent Minnie's happiness was complete in the thought that the last obstacle in her way to the pleasant, peaceful home and useful life which she had planned out for herself was now removed; and it was a very light-hearted, joyous trio which at last set out on the journey towards home. Captain Grantleigh was happy because the purpose of many years had now been accomplished, and Richard's child had been found; Hortense, because she dismissed all disagreeable thoughts concerning the future with the certainty that her ends should yet be gained, and, allowing nothing to trouble her, lived for the present; and Minnie, because she had everything in life



[THE RECOGNITION.]

which she desired to complete her happiness. And so, joyous and gay as a party could well be, they travelled on, making their journey an agreeable pleasure trip until within one day's travel of Grantleigh Grange, when an incident occurred which had a material effect upon the lives of both cousins.

It was a calm summer's day when the sun shone brightly down on land and water, and scarce a breeze stirred the quiet of the atmosphere, when our party were steaming down the river, and being gladdened by the thought of once more setting foot within the confines of their native county before evening closed in. Hortense and Minnie were both seated upon camp chairs in the shade of an awning which had been erected by Captain Grantleigh just before leaving them to enjoy an after-dinner cigar, in company with an old friend, and the two girls, finding the warm afternoon hanging rather heavily upon their hands, had each solaced herself with a book, and with an occasional yawn had attempted to interest herself in the contents.

At length Hortense caught sight of a steamer coming towards them, and, laying down her book, advanced and leaned languidly over the bulwarks to watch the movements of the ship, which soon came up, puffing and blowing as if for breath. The steamer came very near to their own, and it appeared as though a race was her intention.

For a long time Hortense watched the operations on her deck intently, and so interested

did she become that she was not aware how far she was leaning over the low bulwarks until a sudden lurch which the steamer gave caused her to lose her balance, and in another moment her wild cries rent the air as she struggled in the dark waters directly in the path of the oncoming steamer.

Another moment, and all was confusion on deck, no one seeming to know what to do, and in their anxiety to do everything, absolutely doing nothing, when a young man, who had also been leaning over the bulwarks near where the young lady had fallen, and who had stopped only long enough to divest himself of coat and boots, sprang lightly over the side of the boat and brought the half-drowned girl back to safety, not much the worse for her wetting, save a probable cold and a great fright. At once greater confusion reigned than when the young lady was in actual danger, for the pair became the recipients of such pressing attentions that it was with difficulty they at length gained their state-rooms.

As soon as Captain Grantleigh was assured of his daughter's safety, and could compose himself sufficiently, he sought out the young man, who he persisted in thinking had nobly endangered his life to save hers, and tendered to him his heartfelt thanks and gratitude, and found immense satisfaction in the fact that this "hero" was none other than the son of his old friend and college chum, Chester Hall; that he was his father's exact counterpart in name, face and disposition; that he was then "killing

time" during a summer vacation, and that on consideration of a very pressing invitation he would spend a few weeks at Grantleigh Grange.

Of course the result of this interview was promptly reported to the young ladies, and Hortense, who, with closed eyes and drawn features, lay upon a low divan, clad in an elaborately worked dressing-gown, her head resting in Minnie's lap, and a gilded bottle of smelling-salts in her hand, was not so far overcome on receiving the news but that she could overpower her father with questions as to whether he was handsome, agreeable, wealthy, talented, or famous, or perhaps all combined; and Captain Grantleigh received this volley of questions as he had received many another volley from his daughter, and answered, composedly:

"My child, I shall leave you to judge for yourself whether this young man possesses any or all of the necessary acquirements you have named. You will not see him before to-morrow morning, and in the meantime I will leave you to talk him over between yourselves; only don't get to quarrelling over who shall be the ultimate possessor of this bundle of attributes." And with a pleasant "Good-night," he left the two girls alone.

The next morning, the cousins sat in a small, luxurious parlour at one of the fashionable hotels at which the aristocratic people, disembarking from the boats, were wont to "put up," and where they had stopped the night before. Hortense, thanks to Minnie's good care, had suffered no evil effects from her involuntary bath, and now, in a morning wrapper of a delicate shade of blue, with a rose-bud in the feathery halo of golden hair above her pale, fair forehead, reclined with an air of listless languor in a wide arm-chair of dark blue velvet; while Minnie, her pale, olive complexion, dark eyes, and brown hair worn so simply, making such a capital foil for her delicate blonde beauty, flitted about her in her sable robes, doing all in her power to add to the comfort of the languid beauty.

Soon the door opened, and Captain Grantleigh entered, followed by a young man, and then the two girls found themselves bowing in acknowledgment of an introduction to a tall young gentleman with a handsome, sunburned face, grey eyes, a profusion of slightly-waving light-brown hair, and a brown moustache.

This was Hortense's inventory of his attractions, for attractions, she decided, they certainly were; while Minnie at once noted the high, broad forehead, the firm-cut, decided mouth, and the expression of the eyes, which told an observant mind that this man was capable of more depth of feeling, and possessed more strength of mind than is generally accorded the ordinary man of fashion.

Then followed inquiries after the health of Hortense, discussions on the different points through which they had travelled, questions regarding the Grange and their school life, comments on the beauty of the scenery, and endless small-talk and chat, until before the time came for them to resume their journey the two girls felt as if Chester Hall were an old friend instead of a chance acquaintance of the time.

During the remainder of the day Mr. Hall proved himself a very agreeable companion in travel, entertaining the whole party by his ready wit and interesting conversation, and at night, just before they all arrived at the Grange, Hortense found a chance to express her private opinion to Minnie that "Mr. Hall was really all she had told papa she wished him to be, and more, too, for he was a good conversationalist and loved fun, and had a dozen other attractions besides being handsome, agreeable, wealthy and talented. Indeed, he was quite her ideal hero."

Then Minnie had eyes and ears for nothing more, for they came in sight of Grantleigh Grange—the place of her birth and her ancestral



home—and her eyes devoured and drank in the beauty of the lofty old mansion, with its many gables and windows, balconies and verandas, wide doors and tall chimneys, and the extensive grounds and park which surrounded it.

They drove slowly through the great gate and up the tree-shaded carriage-drive, dismounting at the great, double door, and entering the gately hall, from the walls of which the faces of the dead Grantleighs looked down upon them; and old Captain Grantleigh, the last of the noble family which he represented, stepped before them and said, in his stately manner:

"Welcome to Grantleigh Grange."

Then the servants thronged the wide old hall and made it ring with their glad voices of welcome, and the party were conducted into the grand drawing-room on the right, soon to separate to their different rooms, to make ready for the evening meal.

Early the next morning after their arrival, while Hortense was still in her luxurious apartment, and the whole household seemed wrapped in slumber, Chester Hall, walking slowly through the tall, dewy grass beneath the wide elm trees in the extensive grounds, enjoying a prime dinner and the beauty of the morning, was surprised in the midst of a pleasant reverie by hearing a fresh, melodious voice pouring forth Mendelssohn's Hymn of Praise from a summer-house hard by.

For a moment he listened, almost holding his breath. Then he advanced swiftly and paused at the low door of the remote little arbour. Before him stood a figure which he could at first scarcely persuade himself to recognise as the quiet little lady in black with whom he had journeyed—beautiful Miss Grantleigh's little cousin, of whom he had thought so little in comparison with the handsome Hortense as to really forget the name Captain Grantleigh had addressed her by when he was introduced. Of course he had chatted with her in company with her cousin, etiquette forbidding that he should entirely ignore her presence; but his mind had been filled from the first with Hortense's beauty, wit and accomplishments; to the exclusion of other subjects of thought; and so now it followed that the unstudied grace and beauty of the girl, as she stood with folded arms leaning upon the back of a rustic seat, her slight form clad in flowing white, with black ribbons at the throat and binding up the carelessly curling brown hair, her face radiant with health and happiness and her dark eyes glowing like stars, burst upon him like a revelation.

Half bewildered by this new presence he stepped forward, and the sound startled the girl and interrupted her song; but with a little start and slightly heightened colour she retained her self-possession, and bade him a pleasant—

"Good-morning, Mr. Hall."

"Ah, queen of the morning, you are early at your adoration, it seems. Pray do not let me interrupt your song of praise; but hearing it from afar, I could not resist the temptation to ascertain whom I should thank for so much melody."

Minnie Grantleigh sank quietly into her seat, and picked up the book which had fallen from it to the floor, answering composedly:

"Flattery is at a discount with me, Mr. Hall, so please reserve it for someone who can appreciate it more fully. Is it not a beautiful morning? It was impossible for me to content myself with dozing it away in my room, and so—I fear you'll think me rather romantic—I came out here to read, but lost my interest in the thought of a single person when I saw the great book of Nature spread open before me." And her frank smile dispelled any unpleasant feeling which her first words might have called up.

Chester Hall, somewhat taken aback at the coolness with which she received his complimentary speech, and feeling a lively interest in this "odd little piece," as he mentally styled her, seated himself by her side and took the book from her hands. He gave a little start as the title-page met his eyes, and looked quickly

down at the provokingly self-possessed young lady at his side.

"Goethe! What do you read German, Miss—"

He paused at the recollection of the trick his memory had played him in forgetting her name.

"Grantleigh. I thought you knew that I was Captain Grantleigh's niece," answered Minnie. "Yes, I read German now and then, but fear I am forgetting it very fast, as it has been so long since I have had anyone to speak it with. My foster mother, Mrs. Morris, was German by birth, and taught me the language."

"And you are fond of Goethe, are you, Miss Grantleigh? I think many of his poems perfect gems of thought, and often read them myself," said Chester, in German, and waited eagerly for her answer; for he had long known the language, and often wished for someone to talk it with, as had Minnie, and so was agreeably surprised when she answered him with as correct and pure an accent as any maiden of the "Fatherland."

Then followed an interesting and lively discussion of books, authors, and other subjects of mutual interest, in which Chester Hall found his match in the quiet, reserved little cousin of Hortense Grantleigh! and when at length they arose and wended their way to the house in answer to the summons to breakfast, their acquaintance had made decided promise of being an agreeable one, and of soon ripening into a pleasant friendship.

The days passed pleasantly and swiftly by after that, the young people thoroughly enjoying themselves in the usual round of picnics, excursions, parties, etc., to which such have resort when thrown upon their own resources to gain enjoyment; the young folks in the neighbourhood being unusually lively and full of fun, and always ready for a good time, until, when two weeks of almost unalloyed enjoyment had passed, Hortense decided that Minnie was growing altogether too popular and well-liked, both abroad and at home, and that it was high time to put her plan of destroying the happiness of the innocent girl into practice; for her haughty, imperious temper would not allow Minnie to become a greater favourite than herself.

So from the day she came to this resolution she spared no trouble to annoy the gentle girl in every way her wily, jealous mind could devise from bribing the servants to say malicious, spiteful things in her hearing concerning her being "a nameless beggar and impostor who had completely deceived their kind master," down to dressing her hair unbecomingly, or taking advantage of Minnie's reliance upon her taste and superior knowledge in such matters to choose for her a dress or hat which was so decidedly out of keeping with the style of the innocent girl as to shock everyone at her supposed lack of taste.

Hortense never became her open enemy; she was too crafty for that; and so Minnie kept on trusting and believing in her pretended friendship, and becoming more distressed and unhappy at each new source of annoyance and embarrassment.

But the poor child had a comparatively easy time before Hortense's jealous heart awoke to the knowledge that Chester Hall was drifting further and further from her, and spending more and more of his time beside the gentle girl whom she so despised, taking long walks in the elm grove with her, and talking to her in his even, manly tones, that (to her) exasperatingly unintelligible German, which she had come to hate in common with the girl whom she deemed her rival, and whose beauty to hers "was as water unto wine."

She watched Chester's restless longing for her cousin's society, heard his voice take a tenderer tone when addressing her, and saw his eyes follow her form with that unmistakable light in their depths which she knew she had now lost all power to bring forth for herself, had she ever possessed it; she marked the shy droop of Minnie's eyes and the conscious colour upon her cheek when his words fell on her ear,

and realised the state of affairs at once, and set herself to work to prevent the probable results.

She was in no wise afraid of Minnie here if she could deceive Chester; for Minnie was but a child as yet in her knowledge of the world, and was altogether too unconscious of her own beauty and talent, or of her power over the handsome, strong-minded man who had already fallen her victim, though an unacknowledged one.

So Hortense began operations upon Chester, trusting to the course of events to mould Minnie's unsuspecting nature. First came a succession of brilliant toilets, bewildering and overpowering Mr. Hall by her radiant beauty on each occasion; and then followed a course of particularly and unusually gracious speeches and pretty, seemingly artless ways for his benefit, as the days wore on; and this was succeeded by little starts and blushes at his approach, and downcast eyes and low-spoken words, until Mr. Hall grew quite confused and frightened, one day, when thinking it all over, at coming to the conclusion that beautiful Hortense Grantleigh was hopelessly—yes, hopelessly, in the extreme sense of the word—in love with him, and that he was just as much in love—whether hopelessly or not he couldn't quite determine—with her pretty, dark-eyed, sweet-voiced cousin.

Hortense was paving the way to the "grand finale" which she had planned, with much satisfaction, and one fine morning, when Chester Hall was taking his customary stroll and cigar, she struck the finishing blow and eagerly watched the result from her window.

Chester, walking slowly through the tall grass, beneath the drooping trees, as on that first morning, was engaged in deep meditation, regardless of his surroundings, when, by the merest chance, as he neared the little arbour, his eyes fell upon a letter which had evidently been lost by some person, and the wind had blown it to a safe resting-place among some drooping vines.

He picked it up and turned it over and over, trying to discover the name of writer or receiver, but as there was none, he leaned leisurely against a tree and perused it from beginning to end. It was a passionate love letter of the usual type, filled with almost incoherent expressions of love, hope, despair and anger, and ending by begging the writer's darling to answer this, his third letter, either telling him she was still constant, or divulging the reason of her long silence.

"Poor fellow, he's pretty far gone, I should judge," was Chester's careless comment, as he placed the open sheet in his outside pocket and resumed his ramble. "Wonder whose property this interesting bit of romance is, though? Some of the servants', perhaps—certainly not one of the young ladies'."

Dismissing the subject from his thoughts, he made his way on towards a brawling little cataract at the foot of the garden, where he was wont to sit and finish his cigar, the music of the waters rhyming well with his thoughts. Suddenly he paused in surprise at sight of a grey-robed figure standing on the brink.

"Why, Miss Grantleigh—Hortense—have you gone mad, or are you walking in your sleep?" he ejaculated, as she turned her pretty, flushed face towards him.

"Neither, Mr. Hall, only out romancing. 'Tis the early bird that catches the worm, you know, and I have caught something far more beautiful." And she held up a pretty plant which she had taken, root and all, from the moist bank. "Isn't it lovely, though? I'm going straight to have the gardener set it out; only I don't like the feeling of this cold earth on my hands. No, I'll not trust it to you, and I know just what you are waiting to get a chance to say: that such pretty fingers should not be soiled by this black dirt. You see I know you gentlemen. But I do wish I had some paper to wrap it in—why, you ungallant fellow, here is a lot in your pocket, and you stand there and never offer it to me."

And the pretty hand extracted the letter which he had just found from his pocket, and

carelessly let it fall fluttering into the swift little stream.

With a quick exclamation Chester sprang to recover it, but it was whisked away and buried in the sparkling foam.

"And was it of any importance? Why, I am sorry!" cried Hortense, in affected surprise and concern. "But my plant will die if I don't hurry now, and have it set out in my favourite bed."

And away she fitted, leaving Chester to gaze after her in surprise, and then to take his way slowly back to the little summer-house, to have a chat with Minnie, who, he thought, would certainly be there.

He found her looking anxiously about the arbour and lawn, with a troubled look on her pretty face.

"I've lost a letter, Mr. Hall, which I was so careless as to leave upon the seat here, after reading it last night. I always keep my letters, and this one is from one of my dearest friends, and so I value it higher than I otherwise would. Won't you please help me to find it?"

He looked at her a moment with wide-open, staring eyes and dulled senses. Then, like a thunderbolt, the conviction fell upon him that the letter which he had found, and which was now lost for ever, had been written to her by her affianced husband. And she could stand there, now and look at him, with her artless surprised face and innocent eyes, this false, designing woman whom he had loved, and believed innocent and pure! He would not suffer himself in her presence longer, for fear of what he might say or do, and without a word to her he turned and walked unsteadily towards the house and up to his room.

And this was Hortense Grantleigh's plot—well managed and executed—and this was also its result: The night before she had entered the little arbour which Minnie frequented, and, finding a letter lying upon the seat, did not scruple to read it, finding it to be a school-girlish epistle from Belle Merton, announcing her approaching marriage, to the handsome principal of the old academy, talking over news of mutual interest, &c. The letter in itself did not concern her, but through it an idea came to her which she at once acted upon.

She took the letter to her room and destroyed it, then spent half the night in composing, writing in a disguised hand, and placing in his usual path the letter which Chester Hall found. We have seen how well she managed the remainder of the affair at the little cataract, and knowing that Minnie would be sure to make inquiries for her letter, had taken care to be hand by in order to witness the foregoing scene between Chester and her cousin. Now, happy and exultant over her success, she descended to breakfast, radiant in a beautiful toilet, to attempt the full completion of her work.

The party of four met at breakfast, polite, gay and lively as ever, all covering the workings of their own minds beneath the society mask. But after the morning meal, contrary to the usual course of events, it was Hortense who rode at Chester Hall's side on an excursion to a famous point of interest, while Minnie spent the day in sorrow, wondering how she had offended him.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE days sped on until summer merged into autumn, and Chester Hall still lingered at Grantleigh Grange, much to the satisfaction of at least two of its inmates, while the gossip, who had marked his devoted attentions to Minnie at first, now declared her to have been jilted, and him to be engaged to Miss Hortense Grantleigh; for it was only too true that since that morning in mid-summer when he had left Minnie so abruptly in the arbour, without giving her an answer to her simple question, he had treated her ever with studied politeness, and, without deigning her an explanation of his most extraordinary conduct, had transferred his attentions so suddenly and completely to her beautiful cousin as to attract even the notice

and arouse the transient ire of that most unob-serving of mortals, Captain Grantleigh.

It was during the remainder of this summer that Minnie, sorrowing, neglected and alone, had written the remainder of her book, which she had begun during her school-days, pouring her whole soul into the work, and finding in it all the consolation and joy her broken, crushed spirit could receive. Captain Grantleigh, in sympathy and pity for the sorrowing girl, had published it at his own expense, and now gloried in the thought that his niece was the author of a very readable book.

The joy which followed her success, had the effect of lighting up, for the first time in many days, that melancholy countenance, and cheering that sorrowing, weary heart. Not that she ever allowed Chester Hall to know how his desertion had weighed down her spirit and blighted her young life; no, she was too proud, and independent for that, and the society mask had always covered her face save in the presence of her kind uncle, who knew all, and despised what he believed this man to be—a male flirt; but knowing his daughter's disposition too well to oppose her choice of a husband, he wisely held his peace and allowed the course of events to shape the destinies of three people, when a few words from him would have made everything right.

While Chester Hall, deeming himself piqued, and outwitted by the woman he had loved, suffered as acutely as Minnie in her wildest moments of despair, paid assiduous court to Miss Grantleigh, and was now on the point of offering his hand if not his heart to the proud beauty.

They had just returned from a picnic, from which Minnie had absented herself on the plea of indisposition, and now, a merry party, they halted at the gate of Grantleigh Grange to chat awhile in the gloaming before separating for the night. At length Hortense excused herself and left them with a "Good-night to all," and taking this as a signal the party broke up into little groups, and pursued their different ways homeward. Herbert Maynard, a jolly, fun-loving fellow, and usually the life of a company, "button-holed" Chester to talk over the next plan of amusement, and they rode away together, laughing and chatting gaily, after the manner of care-free young men. At length, as they were about to separate for the night, Herbert broke out, as if struck by a sudden thought:

"I say, though, Chester, that intended of yours is a regular genius! That book of hers is excellent in its way. I'd give half my fortune to win the love of a girl like Miss Grantleigh."

"Indeed! I never knew that she had the honour of wearing the blue stocking, or even had an inclination that way," said Chester, with due interest in the theme.

"Well, now, you don't tell me!" exclaimed Herbert in surprise. "I'm sorry I've told her secret, for 'tis plain she meant it as an agreeable surprise to you. She's a sly little puss! But it grows late—good-night, and remember the dance!" And putting spurs to his horse Herbert galloped away.

Chester Hall rode home through the twilight with a new feeling of respect and admiration—almost of love—for Hortense Grantleigh, and a renewed determination to ask her to be his wife to-morrow; for, unintentionally, Herbert, who had been absent some time, and who was thus unacquainted with the precise state of affairs at the Grange, had conveyed the idea to him that Hortense, instead of Minnie, was the author of the new book.

He rode up the broad carriage-drive and entered the great old hall, where he found Hortense, radiantly lovely in an evening toilet of lavender and lace, just ascending the wide stairs. He advanced and took her hands in his.

"Hortense," he said, earnestly, "let me congratulate you. I have but just ascertained that you are the author of a new book which receives much admiration and praise, although I have not seen it as yet. Though some people prate

that 'a suspicion of blue in the stocking will spoil the beauty of the prettiest ankle,' I have always venerated the blue stocking, and will ever say 'all honour to a woman who possesses the spirit and genius to set at naught the objections and obstacles with which she has to contend, and establishes her claim to what she feels to be her rightful place in the literary field.' What is the name of your book, and will you not lend it to me to-morrow?"

Now Hortense fully realised the mistake he had made, and, jealous of the glory of her cousin, she determined to appropriate it herself; and so, in well-affected confusion, she confessed the name of her book, promised it to him on the morrow, and gracefully acknowledged his sincere praise.

Morning again in all its beauty—a soft, warm, delicious morning, filled with the hazy air and drowsy quiet of summer. Chester Hall was once more pacing the flower-bordered path leading to the remote little arbour, not in the hope or expectation of meeting Minnie; but, allowing recollections of the past to throng in upon his mind, he was giving himself up to one more morning in this loved spot, as if nothing had ever come between him and the happiness he once found there.

He was about to pass the open door when a sudden impulse prompted him to look within. There before him, in a corner of the little room, stood a small table piled with books, prominent among which he saw the name of the one which he believed Hortense Grantleigh to have written.

A large pile of manuscript was also thrown carelessly upon it, and a few pieces had fallen to the floor, while before it, in a low chair, sat the girl he had once so passionately loved, clad in the same white dress, with its black ribbons, which she had worn on their first meeting here, while her pre-occupied look, poised pen and pretty, ink fingers, showed plainly her occupation, as well as first suggested the idea to Chester that this Miss Grantleigh, instead of Hortense, was the author of the book which Herbert had mentioned. It was a sudden and unfounded idea, but still he was certain that it was the truth, and so, to make assurance doubly sure, he advanced as coolly as he had done that first morning.

"Pardon me if I am intruding, Miss Grantleigh, but is this book the production of your fancy?" taking up the richly-bound volume and turning the leaves leisurely.

"Well, there may be a few facts in it; otherwise I brought my fancy into requisition," answered Minnie, with a coolness and composure equal to his own. "Why? Have you felt yourself called upon to deliver me a conscience lecture on writing out and sending adrift on the unsuspecting public an account of events I know never to have taken place?" with her old, frank laugh dimpling the corners of her pretty mouth, and hiding the heart-ache beneath it all.

Chester looked at her in surprise and admiration, with the old, ardent love for her in his eyes. Then memory asserted itself, and with a bitter half-smile he said, suddenly:

"Minnie, how soon do you expect to be married to that devoted lover of yours, whose letter I now confess to having found in the grounds, and which was accidentally destroyed? Because, if you've no objections, we might have a double wedding here."

She turned upon him her surprised, angry gaze. He was looking at her earnestly, almost sternly, and waiting for his answer.

"You are pleased to talk in riddles, Mr. Hall. Your language is quite beyond my comprehension. I never had a lover in my life—I haven't faith enough left in mankind to tolerate one—and as for the idea of marriage—"

A toss of the disdainful head finished the sentence better than words could have done, while the dark eyes looked unutterably scorn and contempt all up and down his six feet of professedly despised manhood. The naturally gentle girl had grown strangely changed of late, and dared to express her honest opinion.



"Then to whom did that letter belong which you yourself declared you lost?" questioned Chester.

"I never lost but one letter, and that was from my schoolmate, Belle Merton, and if you know anything of it I'd be very much obliged if you would impart your knowledge to me," she answered, quite recklessly, almost impatiently, turning back to her manuscript again.

In a moment he was at her side, and caught both the little, ink-stained hands in his, and had broken forth into the old, melodious language which they both loved so well; and, as it is very probable German would not be understood by one in ten among my readers, I will not write down all the words spoken in this interview, nor take the trouble to translate them.

But be comforted for the loss of such a bit of sentimentality, for you have the sum and substance of it when I tell you that half an hour afterwards it was a very happy couple that walked up the lawn to the old mansion, and one needed not a second glance to know by other suspicious symptoms than an engagement ring upon the lady's finger that they were betrothed.

And so, also, thought Hortense Grantleigh, watching them jealously from her window, and refused to go down to breakfast, knowing as well as though she had heard it, that the engagement she had so striven to prevent would that morning be announced.

From that time, in her chagrin, anger and disappointment, she refused ever to see them again; so consequently, being on a tour at the time, she was not present at the grand wedding which soon followed at Grantleigh Grange, nor was her ill-will ever felt in the happy home of Mr. and Mrs. Chester Hall. J. W.

## FACETIÆ.

### FERRY MUCH SO.

It is not so strange that M. Jules Ferry is meeting with opposition on Clause seven of his Education Bill. People are always ready to cross a Ferry. — Funny Folks.

### A HOLIDAY.

"Mr pretty laundress, say,  
If mine with your wish tallies,  
You'll go with me to-day  
To see the Crystal Palace."  
"No," said that blanchisseuse,  
"How'er may answer hurts, sir,  
I fear I must refuse—  
I've got two iron shirts, sir!"

"What," I exclaimed again,  
"Can such things come to pass in  
This year of grace? Do men  
Still fear the sly assassin?  
Must girls in coats of mail  
Their modern limbs environ?  
Do ulsters now conceal  
Crusading shirts of iron?"

At this to my surprise,  
A fit of laughing shakes her;  
"Bless you," the girl replies,  
"You've made a slight mistake, sir;  
I know it sounds absurd,  
But what if I should trouble you  
To collar word the third  
And to extract the 'W'?"

I willingly agreed,  
Removed the mentioned letter,  
And found she was indeed  
Fast bound by duty's fetter.  
Then back my hopes I pressed,  
Closed down Pandora's lid on 'em,  
And, with an aching breast,  
Went all alone to Sydenham. — Judy.

### AIIDING AND ABETTING.

In the walking match for the Astley belt in New York, it appears that Weston has hired himself out to his wife for the walk. Mrs. Weston

has laid heavy wagers on her husband's success and most unquestionably has shown herself the better half. — Funny Folks.

### TRULY CONSIDERATE.

GUILELESS MOUNTAIN MAIDEN: "Quick, mother, quick! There are tourists coming up. Put some milk in the saucepan on the fire—they like it warm from the cow!"

— Funny Folks.

### "LIVE AND LET LIVE."

VILLAGE DOCTOR (to the grave-digger, who is given to whiskey): "Ah, John! I'm sorry to see you in this pitiable condition again."

GRAVE-DIGGER: "Toots, sir, can ye no let a'e little fau't o' mine gae by? It's mony a muckle ane o' yours I ha'e happit owre, an' said naeth'g about it!"

— Punch.

### A SINE QUA NON.

PATIENT: "Do you mean to say my complaint is a dangerous one?"

DOCTOR: "A very dangerous one, my dear friend. Still, people have been known to recover from it; so you must not give up all hope. But recollect one thing, your only chance is to keep in a cheerful frame of mind, and avoid anything like depression of spirits!"

— Punch.

### "NO ACCOUNTING FOR TASTE."

SEA-SIDE VISITOR (on the Suffolk Coast): "You'll excuse me, sir, but I notice that you seem to like to sit all day on this exposed spot—"

NATIVE (ancient mariner): "Yes, I dew, sir; 'cause then I know there ain't nobody to the east'ard o' me!"

— Punch.

## HOPE.

Hope's the blossom that is blooming  
In the desert of our life,  
All the toilsome paths perfuming  
In the weary, bitter strife.

'Tis the song that cheers us ever  
When the heart is bruised and sore,  
Seeing always—doubting never!  
Something joyous on before.

Like an anchor doth it stay us,  
When the seas of sorrow roll,  
To o'erwhelm us, and betray us  
On the breakers of the soul.

As a bark it bears us over  
Life's dark ocean's troubled breast,  
Stands us safely in the cover  
Of the harbour of the blest! J. A.

## WANT OF SLEEP.

THE man who has a talent for sleep is to be envied; for the means of peace and rest are ever within his reach. Many poor unfortunates lie awake half the night and get up in the morning weary, unrefreshed and dispirited, wholly unfit, either in body or mind, for the duties of the day; they are not only incapacitated for business, but are often rendered so ungracious in their manners, so irritable and fretful, as to spread a gloom and a cloud over the whole household. To be able to go to bed, and be in a sound, delicious sleep, an unconscious deliciousness, in five minutes, but enjoyed in its remembrance, is a great happiness, and incalculable blessing, and one which we should all strive to enjoy, if possible; and it is undoubtedly the case that we can do much to secure it by taking proper care of ourselves in every way.

Restless nights, to persons in apparent good health, arise chiefly from, first, an overloaded stomach; second, from worldly care; and third, from want of muscular activities proportioned to the needs of the system. Few will have restless nights who take dinner at midday, and nothing after that except a piece of cold bread and a cup

or two of some hot drink; anything beyond that as cake, pie, chipped beef, doughnuts and the like, only tempt nature to eat when there is really no call for it, thus engendering dyspepsia and all its train of evils. Exercise, too, is a powerful agent in the matter. Few will fail to sleep soundly if the whole of daylight, or as much thereof as will produce moderate fatigue, is spent in steady work in the open air, on horse-back, or on foot.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

MINCED MUTTON WITH POACHED EGGS.—Mince the mutton small, taking out all skin and sinew. Put in a stewpan a small piece of butter, with one or two onions, some parsley, and a sprig of tarragon, all chopped fine, and let them fry well in the butter; then add sufficient stock for the quantity of meat; pepper and salt to taste, a little browning if needed for the colour, and a tablespoonful or more of flour, mixed in a little stock of water. Stir constantly, and when the sauce is smooth and well boiled, add the minced mutton, and warm it through, but do not let it boil, or it will be hard. Pour it upon a dish, and serve it with some nicely poached eggs on the top.

BAKED POTATOES.—Potatoes are more nutritious baked than they are in any other manner and they relish better with those who have not been accustomed to eat them without seasoning. Wash them clean, but do not soak them. Bake them as quickly as possible, without burning in the least. As soon as they are done, press each potato in a cloth, so as to crack the skin, and allow the steam to escape. If this is omitted, the best potatoes will not be mealy. They should be brought immediately to table.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

It is stated that the Jesuits are about to rebuild Stonyhurst College at a cost of £100,000.

A NEW field is supposed to be open for women. It is proposed that they should be dentists to their own sex. This is certainly the last field for women.

FINALLY it has been determined to light the Reading-room of the British Museum by electricity. The shape of the room renders it particularly suitable, as the light from the centre will spread its rays on all sides without giving a shadow.

SOUTH AFRICAN DIAMONDS.—A 94½-carat diamond, found recently at Meker's Bush, in the South African diamond fields, was sold on the spot for £7,000. The same "digger" to whose lot this rare find fell unearthed about the same time a fine stone of 26 carats, and another of 10½ carats besides several smaller gems.

MRS. BUTLER—better known as Miss Elizabeth Thompson—has been commissioned by the Queen to paint for her gallery at Windsor two subjects, the one from the Afghan, and the other from the South African war. Mrs. Butler's painting for the Royal Academy next year will be "The Charge of the Scots Greys at Waterloo."

In a curious North of England assault case the very learned magistrate drew a particular distinction between thrashing on Sunday and on a week day. His worship said, inflicting a fine of £5:—"The defendant was not justified in taking the law into his own hands—especially on a Sunday."

A MAN who is always going in for figures, has arrived at the following calculation:—That, if a person were born in a railway carriage, and were to be continually travelling till he was killed by a railway accident, he would, according to the average number of deaths and passengers, live 900 years.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. C.—Your note about "The Forsaken" to hand with thanks.

MY PET.—1. The standard height for the 17th Lancers is 5ft. 8in., and the chest measurement 34in. 2. Recommendations go for much, but you must be of the proper size. 3. For a schoolmaster you must possess the usual knowledge expected of an ordinary schoolmaster.

T. G. F.—Speak frankly to the young lady; tell her that you love her, and ask her to resume the engagement with you.

SUSIE.—The man is not your step-brother, and that answers all your questions and suppositions.

Q. E. B.—Immerse them for two or three days in a bath (at first hot) of logwood eight parts and copperas or acetate of iron about one part. When you find the colour sufficiently deep, remove, rinse in cold water with a little alum dissolved in it, and dry. Then beat well against your hand before a fire till the feather becomes quite soft and curl by drawing each fibre between the face of your thumb and a blunt knife.

DAISY.—We have very little confidence in the reformation of dissipated lovers; but you are young and it will do no harm to wait a year.

INCOGNITO.—We know nothing about the firm to which you refer. Imitations of gold, silver, and diamonds are plentiful in these days. The imitation of gold and gems has been pursued as a matter of scientific experiment and research for several years past. It has been announced from time to time that the result of these scientific labours have been such as to occasion surprise. It is said that some of the imitations of gold and diamonds are so good that it is difficult even for experts to detect them.

ADELA B.—See reply to "X. X. X." in our READER of last week.

M. E.—The best way would be for you to make such good use of your time as to become so intelligent and accomplished that the people with whom you wish to associate will seek you and save you all trouble on the subject. Right-minded and self-respecting people are not apt to "run after society," as the phrase is, but are content to do their duty, mind their own business, and let their life and character make their place for them in society.

S. W.—Secret engagements, in opposition to the wishes of parents, are very apt to be unfortunate, and they are always wrong. The boy to whom you refer can certainly afford to wait several years before marrying, and the chance is that the longer he waits the better able he will be to help you to come to a right conclusion on the subject which now troubles you.

EVELINE.—Introduce her as your sister-in-law. When people are intimately acquainted, and know all about the relationship beforehand, sometimes a sister-in-law is then introduced as a sister; but even in such a case it is better to be exactly right.

O. P. Q.—Adam died at the age of 930 years. You will find the chronology of his life set forth in the first five verses of the fifth chapter of Genesis.

CARLILE.—Tennyson was born in 1809 and Dickens in 1812.

S. E. C.—See reply to "Q. E. B." Perhaps it will answer your purpose also.

N. W.—Eat farinaceous food.

ONE AND ALL.—Washing the head once a week would, we think, be beneficial.

MISS W.—We have repeatedly stated that we make no charge for the insertion of matrimonial advertisements.

MARY D.—To make walnut hair-dye use the shells of green walnuts; bruise them as small as possible; put them in a bottle, and cover with equal parts of rectified spirits and water; allow it to remain for forty-eight hours, then drain off, and scent it with oil of lavender. Another plan is, pack the bruised shells of green walnuts into a clean metal saucepan; cover them with cold water, and simmer slowly at the side of the fire for twelve hours; then strain off, bottle and cork for use; scent with oil of lavender, or any scent preferred. Apply carefully only to the hair, as it will stain the skin.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL BE PUBLISHED A NEW STORY, ENTITLED,

## "LINKED LOVES,"

By the Author of "Clarice Villiers; or, What Love Feared."

AFTER DOG'S HOUSE, YOUNG EDWARD, NORRY, and ROBERT JEM, four seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with four young ladies with a view to matrimony. After Dog's House is twenty-one, medium height, dark, good-looking, fond of music and dancing. Young Edward is twenty-four, dark, fond of music. Norry is twenty-three, fair, good-looking, medium height, fond of dancing. Robert Jem is twenty-two, tall, fond of music, fair, good-looking.

PRIMROSE, VIOLET, and DAISY, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Primrose is twenty-two, dark, medium height. Violet is twenty-one, dark hair, blue eyes. Daisy is twenty, dark hair and eyes. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-five.

SILVIA F., twenty-four, a domestic, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a young man between twenty-five and thirty.

QUILL DRIVER and THROAT HALLIARDS, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Quill Driver is twenty, blue eyes, medium height. Throat Halliards is twenty-one, good-looking, blue eyes. Respondents must be good-tempered, fond of home and children.

L. B., fifty, would like to correspond with a lady of suitable age.

ALICIA and MILLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Alicia is twenty, dark, of a loving disposition. Milly is eighteen, brown hair, gray eyes, medium height, loving.

## EVENING AND NIGHT.

The golden glow is fading slow  
And sinking in the west,  
From steeples red the light has fled  
To highest mountain crest.

And on the road with creaking load  
Go wagons from the mill,  
That slowly creep above the steep  
And hide behind the hill.

And dimes do sit and deftly knit  
The open door before,  
The descan smokes and cracks his jokes  
And stories tell of yore.

The village boys run by with noise,  
And loud the inn-door slams,  
And falling out a drunken lout  
Goes staggering from his drama.

And just before a score or more  
Of urchins playing ball,  
Turn back to see with mocking glee  
The drunkard reel and fall.

And rising soon the summer moon  
Sheds brilliance on the scene,  
Were lovers walk and softly talk  
The shady trees between.

While dimly seen above the green  
The will-o'-wisp moves slow  
And tales are told by farmers old  
How 'tis the sign of woe.

It waxes late! the farm-house gate  
Now swings and slaps no more,  
And Rover lays and loudly bays  
From post beside the door.

P. L.

TIN HAT, ROVER, and SWIFTSURE, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Tin Hat is twenty-two, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition. Rover is twenty-one, blue eyes, and fond of music. Swiftsure is twenty-one, of a loving disposition, blue eyes, fond of music and dancing.

ANNIE and GRACE, two friends, would like to correspond with two musicians with a view to matrimony. Annie is fond of home, children, and music. Grace is dark, fond of home and music.

J. P. and S. M., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. J. P. is twenty-one, tall, good-looking. S. M. is twenty-two, medium height, fair, handsome. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty, and loving.

JENNIE and NORRY, two sisters, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Jennie is twenty, medium height, dark. Norry is eighteen, good-looking, and of medium height. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-six, dark.

GALLIPO JOE, ARTAKI HARRY, ISMICH GEORGE, and CHANACK TOM, four seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with four young ladies. Joe is fair, good-looking, fond of children. Harry is dark, handsome. George is fair. Tom is good-looking, Auburn hair, blue eyes, fond of music.

GEORGE B., twenty-three, medium height, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

LONELY WILLIE and MERRY PAT, two seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Lonely Willie is twenty-two, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Merry Pat is twenty-one, medium height, black hair and eyes, fond of music. Respondents must be good-looking, fond of home, music, and children, and reside in or near Plymouth.

DITTY BOX, OIL SKIN, and BLACK HAT, three seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with three young ladies. Ditty Box is twenty, dark curly hair, hazel eyes, fond of music, of a loving disposition. Oil Skin is nineteen, light hair, blue eyes, fond of children. Black Hat is twenty-four, dark brown hair and eyes, and has a good income.

NORRY LIGHT and BELL ROCK, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Norry Light is twenty-one, medium height, dark, hazel eyes, fond of children. Bell Rock is twenty-five, fair, blue eyes. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-two.

HEDFACK and TONHANDY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Hedfack is twenty, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes. Tonhandy is twenty-two, dark hair and eyes, fond of home and children. Respondents must be about nineteen, fond of home and children.

THULL, twenty-eight, well-educated, a sergeant in the army, would like to correspond with a lady with a view to matrimony.

HARRY and TOM, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Harry is twenty-two, medium height, light hair, blue eyes, fond of dancing. Tom is twenty-three, dark hair and eyes, good-looking, and fond of children.

ALICE and SYLVIA, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Alice is eighteen, light hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Sylvia is seventeen, medium height, light brown hair and eyes, good-tempered, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home and children. Respondents must be about twenty, good-looking.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

HARRY is responded to by—M. E. B., dark, fond of home and children, medium height.

JAMES by—Annie J., eighteen, tall, fond of home and children.

ALISON by—Happy Joe, a seaman in the Royal Navy, good-looking, loving.

LOVING LOTTIE by—Charles, twenty-four, dark, good-tempered; and by—J. M., twenty-four, medium height, dark, good-tempered, of a loving disposition.

W. W. by—T. G., nineteen, dark, brown hair and eyes, of a loving disposition.

LOO by—Albert, twenty-five, dark hair, hazel eyes, tall, medium height, fond of music.

FRYTHLOOT by—Loving Home Bird, twenty-three, dark, thoroughly domesticated.

BOTANY by—Rebecca, twenty-three, fair, fond of home, blue eyes; and by—Emmaline, nineteen, medium height, of a loving disposition.

DARKIE by—E. K.

MARIE by—Robert N., thirty, tall, dark hair and eyes.

ST. CLAIR by—Lillie, eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes, domesticated, of a loving disposition.

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